



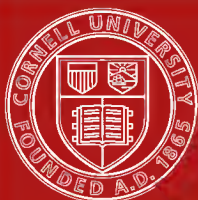
CORNELL  
UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARY



CORNELL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY



3 1924 092 900 202



Cornell University  
Library

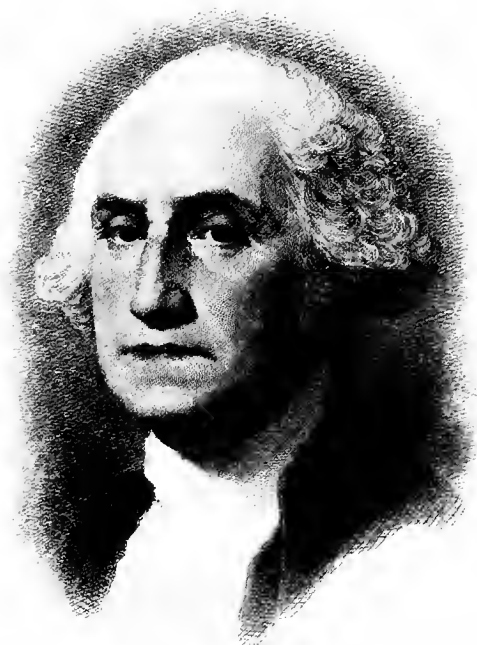
The original of this book is in  
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in  
the United States on the use of the text.

<http://www.archive.org/details/cu31924092900202>







*Engraved by H. Wright Smith. After the Painting by Gilbert Stuart.*

THE FAVORITE PORTRAIT OF WASHINGTON

# The Story-Life of Washington

A Life-History in Five Hundred True Stories,  
Selected from Original Sources and  
Fitted Together in Order

BY

WAYNE WHIPPLE

Author of  
"The Story-Life of Lincoln,"  
Etc.

With Reproductions of Paintings, Engravings and Manuscripts



VOLUME I



The John C. Winston Company  
Philadelphia

COPYRIGHT 1911,  
BY THE JOHN C. WINSTON CO

295 Pp. 03

297 n -

TO MOTHER



# INTRODUCTORY

## Remarks about the Real Washington

---

It has long been the fashion among those writing lives of Washington to state that their readers had never until then enjoyed the privilege of becoming acquainted with the real George Washington. Nearly every recent biographer has announced that he was now taking down the wooden image called "Washington" from its high pedestal and reviving it, somewhat as the statue of Galatea became a living woman before the astonished gaze of Pygmalion, the sculptor who had fashioned her beautiful form in marble. These resuscitations have been going on for a generation, and several of the so-called "true" Washingtons bear hardly a family resemblance to one another, so it is reasonable to infer that some of them, at least, have as little likeness to the great original himself. The variations in the many portraiture are doubtless due, not to the different colors of the eyes of the several painters, but to their varying points of view. Each of these pictures is good, as far as a single full-length portrait can go. It is the intention here to avail ourselves of hundreds of these and focus them together like a composite photograph, or rather, from all sides and angles of view, make a solid, living, moving picture of George Washington and his wonderful career. The well-rounded result shall speak for himself, as far as possible, from his journals, letters, addresses and reported conversations, which have been systematically recorded and carefully preserved, apparently, for the special benefit of the reader of *The Story-Life of Washington*.

Where the personal equation of the biographer cannot

be eliminated entirely, this is shown to be impossible and the reader can make his own allowances. The stories are chosen with an eye single to the aim of *letting*, not *making* the observer see George Washington, as he lived and moved and had his being in and through the troublous times in which his life-lot was cast. These five hundred stories are given, without comment, for the American reader is capable of drawing his own conclusions if he is but permitted to see things as they were. This is one great advantage offered by the *Story-Life*, for by it the present author is enabled, largely, to leave himself out of the narrative. He can shed many lights around the life and character of this wonderful subject, whereas, if he held up only the lantern of his one limited view, he might cast his own shadow across the very object he wishes to show to others.

Still, it is not an unmixed evil, this tendency of the painter to paint himself upon his historic canvas. It is equally natural for the biographer to write his own character into the characterization of his subject. For instance, "Parson" Weems shows little George Washington to have been a small prig, and develops the great George Washington into a pompous, pedantic sort of a demigod. But the writer's personality may relieve and shed light, instead of casting shadows upon the character he portrays. Mark Twain, in his beautiful story of Jeanne d'Arc creates a novel Maid of Orleans, with a keen American sense of humor, using slang of such modern vintage as "ramshackle." In this way the dull but devoted damsel of Domremy is endowed not only with the "*defects* of her own qualities," as the French say, but the *perfections* of the *author's* qualities.

Many writers still inveigh against the Rev. M. L. Weems, but their worst accusations seem to be that he fiddled, and peddled his own books from door to door. As for his making out the little Washington boy a prig, it should be said that all authors for "the young," from Maria Edge-



worth down to the father of the "Rollo books," fabricated little prigs after the same pedantic pattern for the delectation of their readers. As to Weems's painful attempt to evolve a demigod out of his model boy, all the authors and orators of Weems's day, and even later, did the same with regard to Washington. The worst thing about Weems's life, in the opinion of other writers, seems to be that it became popular, and the apocryphal stories in it have continued with us unto this day. It is stated, on good authority, that the hatchet-and-cherry-tree incident did not appear in Weems's "Life of Washington" until 1806, and when some one took him to task for making up that little story, he sweetly smiled and asked, "Was it not good for the boys?" This benevolent bit of fiction seems to be original with Weems, though he was a poor writer, unless the story was really told him by that aged relative, as he states, which is neither impossible nor unlikely. At all events, if the parson errant made up that story "out of whole cloth" with criminal intent, as is often maintained, the evil was overruled for good to Young America, for the cherry-tree incident stands out in bold relief, as almost the only thing in the life of the Father of his Country that the popular mind has grasped, aside from the fact, perhaps, that he was a general in the Revolutionary War and the first President of the United States. The hatchet and the cherries have become symbols in the minds of many millions, of George Washington and truthfulness. A French traveler and *littérateur* has written that the reason American children have come up with a deeper regard for truth than those of any other nation under heaven is because they have been brought up on the story of the little boy Washington's early regard for truth. Dr. Edward Everett Hale claims that this story is as true as many that are told in Plutarch's "Lives."

The very biographers who seem to have no religious regard for truth in the abstract have much to say about

the falsity of the story that Washington, at any time in his life, "could not tell a lie," and stoutly claim that he afterwards overcame that disability—if he ever had it!

It should be remembered especially that "all is fair in love and war," and Washington was much in one or the other, or in both, for he was always attracted by a pretty face, and was fond of drinking tea with a "bevvy of females." He was considered a great ladies' man, and is said to have seemed more at his ease among women than among men—later in life, at least. In his earlier days Washington was shy and reserved with everybody but his own family and intimate friends.

Once in a while some one evidently desirous of notoriety, cheap and brief, rushes into the newspapers with so-called proof that George Washington perjured himself, on occasion, by swearing away a small sum in taxes. It is sometimes stated, on the same kind of authority, that John Hancock, Sam Adams, and other Revolutionary patriots and leaders, were frauds and embezzlers, going into the rebellion business for what they could get out of it. Nothing could be more ridiculous or inane, for Hancock, as an example, was a merchant prince, with much to lose, in material wealth, and nothing to gain but liberty and self-respect. The British discounted such stories of those "rebels" whom we now call patriots, by discovering at once that they were rascals and guilty of all the crimes in the calendar, besides being traitors and outlaws.

Some of the writers about Washington would like to be called iconoclasts, but they are really scavengers. These are the night-soilers who seem to enjoy circulating unsavory tales about the Founder and Father of his Country, and who take pleasure in quoting Thomas Carlyle, the dyspeptic philosopher, who took ghoulish glee in slapping American visitors in the face with this remark: "Jarge Washington was no' a great mon!" Yet, in spite of the old pessimist's want of perspective, and his consequent admiration for

Napoleon, Carlyle's favorite, was a colossal failure and Washington became an immortal success. Napoleon, at close range, illustrated the Right of Might, while Washington is demonstrating to the ages the Might of Right.

"Seek and ye shall find" apparently applies to vices as well as virtues. A man is not like a chain, only as strong as its weakest link. Men should be measured by their strongest points. It is unfair not only to Washington but to the American people to disparage or explain away his true greatness. It is unworthy and mean to teach the rising generation that young Washington earned a reputation for being close-mouthed because he had unsightly teeth, and his solemnity, in later life, was due to the fact that his "false" teeth fell down whenever he laughed—statements which bear only a remote resemblance to the truth and are more dangerous than out-and-out lies. The neighbors and friends of a great man are not the best judges of his greatness. It is stated, on good authority, that Washington's last years were embittered by the knowledge that if he had allowed his name to be used for a third term of the presidency, Virginia, his own State, would not have voted for him, though the other twelve would gladly have elected him again. With a great man it is as with a high mountain, a low hill viewed from a nearer point may hide the loftiest peak. There are still living in Springfield, Illinois, men who "knew Lincoln," yet they are eager to tell any newcomer that there were a dozen greater men right in Springfield when Abraham Lincoln only happened to be nominated and elected to the presidency.

A Scotch neighbor, Davie Burns, who had owned the field in which Washington was superintending the building of "the President's palace," and had sold much of his land for the site of the national capital, gave expression to a warped and petty estimate of the greatness of the Father of his Country one day, when Washington called to remon-

strate with him about hindering the hauling of stone across his land from the river landing to the place where the "palace" was in process of erection. The former President reminded the peppery little Scotchman that the building of the President's house and of the "Federal City" there had been the making of David Burns, and but for that the disobliging Scot would still be a poor tobacco planter. Old Davie's "Scotch" was up in an instant.

"Aye, mon," he retorted, "an' what would *you* have bean, Meesther Washington, if ye hadn' merried the Widdy Coostis an' all her *naygurs*? Ye'd 'a' bean a land surveyor the day, an' a *mighty puir ane a' that!*"

Cranky old Davie Burns's notion must have been a novel one to Washington, but it was not so strange as the misconceptions of his character expressed in some of the many histories, stories and articles on Washington. Weems's maudlin ideas have been referred to. Sparks's editing the human life out of Washington's correspondence, to make him a model, did much toward making him a wooden image instead.

Little is known of Washington's mother. Most writers, assuming that he got his greatness from his mother, try to "restore" her whole life from incomplete fragments, as the scientists reconstruct a whole animal of which they have found a single joint. They reason in a circle, evidently saying to themselves, "He must have got his greatness from his mother, therefore she was a grand woman, and had a mighty influence in moulding his great character, so he must have resembled his mother, therefore his mother must have looked like her illustrious son." As a matter of fact, Washington himself claimed to resemble his father in appearance and character.

Mary Washington's too narrow devotion to her eldest son would have interfered with his grand career if he had always heeded her wishes. Though obedient to and considerate of her, the time came when the call of his country

was stronger than his mother's. Late in life her complaints that he neglected her were a grief and annoyance to him, especially when she persisted in accepting financial aid from people who were no relation to her, by giving the impression that she was in needy circumstances, after she had been amply provided for by her celebrated son. On several occasions George mildly expressed his displeasure at this trait of his mother's, in letters to his brother and sister. But the annoyance he felt did not warrant a recent writer in making Washington give vent at every turn, in a supposed biography, to sarcastic reflections on his mother—years after her death! Whatever provocation Mary Washington may have given her son, such pettishness in his attitude toward his mother was entirely out of character.

In gathering, from a hundred sources, largely from the many admirable biographies extant, over five hundred stories, some of which have never been in print, it is the intention to show Washington in many lights, but to keep the resultant impression in a temperate middle ground, while a few extravagant conceits are inserted to show the absurd lengths to which some writers have permitted themselves to go, somewhat as a theologian might flash certain "side-lights from profane history" upon a Scriptural narrative.

It is not generally known that Washington had a broad sense of humor. He greatly enjoyed jests, sometimes good-natured practical jokes, and generally welcomed a chance to laugh. It is said that even during the "long and dreary winter" at Valley Forge, he found relief now and then from the sadness and misery of his environment in hearty laughter. He showed a disposition to make the best of everything, even to laughing until the tears rolled down his cheeks over the sallies of his adopted children and friends who visited Mount Vernon. He made many gibes himself at the expense of a certain "blue-blooded" jackass which had been presented to him by the

king of Spain,—sometimes comparing the solemn little beast to his former owner, the king himself!

A good story is told of two judges, Washington's nephew, Bushrod, and John Marshall, long Chief Justice of the United States, who came to pay the Washingtons a visit of respect. Not wishing to present themselves, travel-stained and dusty, at Mount Vernon, they turned aside into a grove on the estate to change their clothing throughout. When they were completely stripped, their colored body-servant opened the portmanteau to give them their changes of raiment, but found nothing for them to put on but an assortment of tape, needles, thread, fancy soaps, perfumery and the like. The man had exchanged packs with a peddler at the last inn. The consternation on the servant's countenance and the absurdity of their predicament set the two visitors laughing at each other. The master of Mount Vernon, who happened to be near, came at once to inquire into the cause of this merriment. Recognizing the dignified members of the judiciary in the undress of the Garden of Eden, dancing about in his grove like a pair of satyrs, hiding among the trees, and comprehending at a glance their ludicrous plight, Washington, the solemn and austere, was so overcome that he threw himself upon the ground and rolled over and over, holding his sides, convulsed and shrieking with uncontrollable laughter!

This is wholly at variance with the popular notion of the distant, cold, and taciturn First President of the United States. Story after story is to be found in this collection illustrating Washington's warm-heartedness and hospitality. In a letter he mentioned the fact that he and his wife would have to sit down to dinner that day without a guest, *the first time in twenty years*. One visitor at Mount Vernon tells of his astonishment, after retiring for the night, to see the stately form of George Washington enter the room,—looking more gigantic than ever because clothed in his

nightshirt—coming to bring his guest a cup of hot tea for his cold, about which the host was most solicitous, though Washington would never take anything for a cold himself.

These glimpses of his humanity, hospitality and humor are agreeable and refreshing, helping us to understand and love him as we learn to know the real Washington. Although he was not, himself, like Lincoln, a master storyteller, the greatest writers of history and fiction have related many thrilling and beautiful stories, and have narrated much that is full of keen and lively interest about the Father of his Country. From Washington's own diaries, which he faithfully kept nearly all his life, his letters, his addresses and state papers, much good material has been drawn which should reveal the actual life of Washington.

*The Story-Life of Washington* is designed to give true views of the First American from every point of vantage, leaving the reader to see and feel and know the great Washington. This is presented as a *life*, and not a *libel* on that great and good man,—“first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen.” There are many questions about which historians do not agree. But “when doctors disagree, who shall decide?” After all the facts and facets of his character are presented and illuminated, who shall be better able to recognize the real George Washington than the reader himself?

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Fay Stipp". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## VOLUME I

	PAGE
Introductory Remarks about the Real Washington .....	xiii
List of Illustrations .....	xxxi

## CHAPTER I

Washington's Antecedents .....	I
--------------------------------	---

*Stories:*—Genealogy of the Washington Family—Early Ancestry of Washington's Mother—Two Ancestral Homes—Some Ancestral Fighters—Part of His Pedigree—American Ancestry—Two Letters about a Mary Ball—Mary, the Mother of Washington—Conjectures about Washington's Father and Mother—Mary Washington's First Home.

## CHAPTER II

George and His Father .....	20
-----------------------------	----

*Stories:*—His Birth—Parson Weems—Little George and the Sin of Selfishness—The Moral and Entertaining Story of the Little Hatchet—The Father's True Moral Stature—What George's "Pa" Did to Startle Him—Giving up the Leading-rein—Little George Washington—"Advantages" George Was Spared—Schools in Virginia—Peter and "Hobby"—His Earliest Playfellows—George Tells His Father What He Hopes to Be—Two Boyish Letters—Brother Lawrence—The Fairfax Family—"I Lost My Best Friend"—Table of Events, 1732 to 1752.

## CHAPTER III

George and His Mother .....	42
-----------------------------	----

*Stories:*—The Widow and Her Brood—Work on "Ferry Farm"—His First Hunt—Three Important Years—In Mr.

Williams's School—George and the Younger Children—Early Education and Discipline—Why George Was Not Sent to School in England—A Little Latin—"Mute as Mice" before Mary Washington—The Rev. James Marye and the "Rules of Civility"—"Rules of Civility and Behaviour"—Long Suspense after Writing to Uncle Joseph about George's Going to Sea—A Bitter Disappointment—Uncle Joseph's Letter—How He Gave It All up—How George "Jolted It off."

## CHAPTER IV

### George and the Fairfax Family . . . . . 67

*Stories:*—Lord Fairfax's Friendship for Young Washington—Fox-hunting with Lord Fairfax—Encouraged to Take up Surveying—A Full-length Portrait of Washington at Sixteen—Two Georges Go Surveying—He Went in a School-boy and Came out the First Soldier in the Colonies—From Washington's First Journal—How Lord Fairfax Read Washington's First Journal—Conflicting Claims to the Ohio Country—Labored Love Lines—"I Used Often to Wish He Would Talk More"—County Surveyor at Seventeen.

## CHAPTER V

### George and His Brother Lawrence . . . . . 81

*Stories:*—"They Mean to Steal Our Country"—The Ohio Company Sends Christopher Gist—"A Most Delightful Country"—Major Washington's Broadsword Practice Interrupted—Arrival of the Washington Brothers at Barbadoes—"Beefsteak and Tripe" Club, "George Barnwell," and Smallpox—Lawrence "Hurrying Home to His Grave!"—The Home-coming—The Art of War and Manual of Arms—The Unmarried Master of Mount Vernon.

## CHAPTER VI

### A Difficult and Dangerous Mission . . . . . 97

*Stories:*—The Youthful Envoy—Receiving His Instructions—Governor Dinwiddie's Letter to the French Commandant—George, Van Braam and Gist Set out—Going on

from Williamsburg—The Indian Council at Logstown—  
From Logstown to Venango—Drink and Diplomacy—A  
Week from Washington's Diary—The French Comman-  
dant's Reply—A Man of Action and Real Silence—What  
Governor Dinwiddie Did.

## CHAPTER VII

### The Opening of His Military Career ..... 116

*Stories:*—Beginning of the Journal of 1754—The Half-king's  
Speech and Belts—A Council of War—Washington's Speech  
and Belt to the Half-king and the Reply—Captain Trent  
Loses the Strategic Point—"I Would Prefer the Toil of a  
Daily Laborer"—The March to Great Meadows—His First  
Victory—Washington's Account of the Attack near Great  
Meadows and His Defense of It—"That I Know to Be  
False!"—A Prologue of the Revolutionary Drama—  
"Snatching Victory from the Jaws of Defeat"—The  
Articles of Capitulation—End of His First Campaign—  
"The Same Identical Gent"—"The Season Calls for  
Despatch"—The First Blow of the Seven Years' War—  
"All is Fair in—War"—The Only Course Possible.

## CHAPTER VIII

### Through the Campaign with Braddock..... 141

*Stories:*—The Young Commander and the Pig-headed Gover-  
nor—Serious Troubles and Petty Annoyances—Washington,  
Franklin and General Braddock—General Braddock's Aide-  
de-camp—In the Battle at Fort Duquesne—A Description  
of the Battle—His Hatred of Cowardice—"Unite or Die!"—  
Denies "Grossly Exaggerated" Report of His Death—  
"I Could Offer Myself a Willing Sacrifice"—Close of His  
Career as a Frontier Fighter.

## CHAPTER IX

### The Young Colonel Goes Courting ..... 156

*Stories:*—The Colonel of the Colony—How Colonel Washington  
"Took" Boston—The Handsome Colonel Rode away to  
Boston Town—A Chain of Forts and the Gentlemen  
Associators—Big George Washington—Broken in Health—

A Brief but Courtly Courtship—"A Few Words" to His Affianced—"The Story of an Untold Love"—The Fall of Fort Duquesne—Elected to the House of Burgesses—Table of Events, 1750 to 1760.

## CHAPTER X

### The Wealthy Planter of Mount Vernon ..... 168

*Stories:*—The Sunshine and Glitter of the Wedding Day—Married Life at Mount Vernon—Taking Charge of the Custis Estate—A Kind and Indulgent Stepfather—Life of a Virginia Planter—Manufacturer and Fisherman as Well as Farmer—Where to Build the New Church—Pleasantest Glimpses of Family Feeling—Beating a Rascally Poacher—A Facetious Letter—A Manly, Wholesome, Many-sided Life—The Outer Man—Social Diversions and the Dismal Swamp Company—Table of Events, 1760 to 1770.

## CHAPTER XI

### The Virginia Colonel and the Coming Conflict ..... 187

*Stories:*—The Stamp Act and Patrick Henry—The Grand Sachem's Prophecy—"Our Lordly Masters in Great Britain"—"Catch a Man before You Hang Him"—Feasting and Fasting—Washington Presents Resolutions—"More Becoming a Turkish Bashaw"—The Silent Man Becomes Eloquent—"An Innate Spirit of Freedom"—"An Appeal to Arms and the God of Hosts"—"A Mere Potomac Planter"—In Front of Carpenters' Hall—"A Brother's Sword Sheathed in a Brother's Breast"—The News Received in Philadelphia—Lee and Gates Visit Mount Vernon—"I Now Nominate George Washington, of Virginia"—Colonel Washington Elected Commander-in-chief—Washington's Commission as Commander-in-chief—Table of Events, 1770 to 1775.

## CHAPTER XII

### Commander-in-chief and Raw Recruits ..... 211

*Stories:*—"A Subject Which Fills Me with Inexpressible Concern"—Brave Exploits of Commodore Whipple—"The Feeble Americans Could Scarce Keep up with Them!"—Few Men but Many Heroes—Left Home, Wife, Friends,

Fortune, and Security, for the Risks of a Rebel—"The Liberties of the Country Are Safe!"—A King of Men—The Foremost Man in America—The Noblest Man of His Day—The Virginia Fox-hunter and the New England Farmers—"Their Spirit Has Exceeded Their Strength"—"General Gage, Take Care of *Your* Nose!"—"Most Unsoldier-like in Figure"—"An Egregious Want of Public Spirit"—The Ministers Who Provoked and Prolonged the Revolution—Provisions, Discipline, Ammunition Scarce—Scouring the Country for Powder—Trials with Friend and Foe—"Old Put" and the Fat Woman—"Seized Two Brawny Riflemen by the Throat"—Some Relaxation and a "Handsome Lift"—Table of Events in 1775.

### CHAPTER XIII

#### Driving the British out of Boston ..... 239

*Stories:*—Raising the Grand Union Flag on New Year's Day, 1776—Not the Stars and Stripes—"Obliged to Conceal It from My Own Officers"—The Blockade of Boston—"It Is a Noble Cause"—"When the Dreadful 'Tomorrow' Will Be, I Know Not"—"With the Expedition of Genii"—"Evacuate the Place as Soon as Possible"—A British Burlesque Turned to Melodrama—"There Never Existed a More Miserable Set of Beings!"—The British Sentry Was a Dummy—"The Face of Disorder and Confusion"—"It Takes the Ragged Boys to Do The Fighting"—"No Man Ever Commanded under More Difficult Circumstances"—"Execrable Parricides!"

### CHAPTER XIV

#### The Stars and Stripes and the Declaration of Independence . . 259

*Stories:*—The Commander-in-chief Invited to Confer with Congress—Going to Philadelphia—Consulting with Congress on the Coming Campaign—Attended by Indians, Washington Reviews the Troops—General Washington and the Stars and Stripes—Ordering the Flag Made—Stars and Stripes Not from Washington's Coat-of-arms—Drawing up and Discussing the Declaration—A Badly Armed, Undisciplined, Disorderly Rabble—Conspiracy to Kill or Kidnap Washington—"A Most Barbarous and Infernal Plot"—In a Board of Treasury, Flying Camp, and Barn Hos-

pital—How the Declaration Was Received in New York—Statue of George III Melted into Bullets—"The Times That Try Men's Souls"—"Unpack His Heart with Words?"—"George Washington, Esq., etc., etc."

## CHAPTER XV

### Defeats and Retreats ..... 278

*Stories:*—General Howe Turns the Tables—The Masterly Retreat from Long Island—In a Tempest of Anger at Kip's Bay—"No Time for the Army to Lose Their General"—"I Can Only Regret That I Have but One Life"—A Short, Sharp Action at White Plains—"If We Do Meet Again—Why, We Shall Smile"—"Perhaps to Lose My Character"—Six Weeks after the Battle of Long Island—The British Take Fort Washington—Who Would Have Blamed Him?—A Letter to the Mother of Mary Philipse—Sharing His Blanket with a Negro Servant.

## CHAPTER XVI

### "Hurt in the House of His Friends" ..... 296

*Stories:*—When the Friend of His Bosom Could So Misjudge Him—"Made a Prisoner by a Brat!"—"Opened by Mistake," by George Washington—The "Marine Turtle" and Admiral Howe's Flagship—Facing the Grim Realities Alone—The Capture of General Charles Lee—"By His Own Folly and Imprudence"—A View of the Situation—The Most Hopeless Gang of Tramps—"For Heaven's Sake, Keep This to Yourself!"—"What a Time Is This to Hand Me Letters!"

## CHAPTER XVII

### Trenton and the Turn of the Tide ..... 309

*Stories:*—"Advance and Charge!"—Colonel Rahl's Fatal Game—"A Smiling Expression on His Countenance"—Washington's Report of the Battle of Trenton—Table of Events in 1776—"George Will Not Forget Himself"—"Intrusted with Almost Unlimited Power"—Robert Morris Raises Some "Hard Money"—Horse Lovers and Heroes—"The Old Fox" and the Battle of Princeton—"Thank God! Your

Excellency Is Safe!"—Washington's Report of the Battle of Princeton—Troubles about Allegiance and Rank—Washington's Proclamation—A Sarcastic Reply to the Howes' Proclamation of Pardon—Washington Had Taken Howe's Measure.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### Brandywine and Germantown..... 328

*Stories:*—Waiting at Morristown—Remained Standing throughout the Whole Service—"Try Me!"—The General's Narrow Escape—Washington Weeps—No Money for His Men—Defeat at Chad's Ford, Brandywine Creek—Report of the Battle of Brandywine—A Small Defeated Army Defies the Victor—A Drunken General at Germantown—Fighting in Fog—"You Will Fire upon Your Own People!"—Holding up Their Empty Cartridge Boxes—Heroic General Nash—How the Battle Was Lost—"Ah, These Americans Are an Elastic People!"





# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

## VOLUME I

The Favorite Portrait of Washington.....	Frontispiece
Washington's Autographs at Different Periods.....	Facing Page 45
Fox-hunting with Lord Fairfax.....	" " 69
Major George Washington.....	" " 101
Washington's First Encounter, near Great Meadows..	" " 125
Colonel Washington Introduced to Mary Philipse, the New York Heiress.....	" " 159
Colonel Washington Visits Mrs. Custis.....	" " 163
Mrs. Martha Dandridge Custis Washington.....	" " 169
Miniature Portrait of Colonel Washington.....	" " 186
Captain Abraham Whipple Attacks the "Gaspée"....	" " 192
"The Embattled Farmers" on Concord Bridge.....	" " 202
General Ethan Allen Demands the Surrender of Fort Ticonderoga.....	" " 210
The Battle of Bunker Hill.....	" " 216
Portraits of Four Generals Besieging Boston: Morgan, Ward, Putnam, and Knox.....	" " 224
"Seizing Two Brawny Riflemen by the Throat".....	" " 236
Arrival of General Knox with Cannon from Ticonderoga	" " 242
Sir William Howe and the British Leaving Boston....	" " 254
Announcing the Declaration of Independence from the Steps of Independence Hall.....	" " 272
Lord Stirling at the Battle of Long Island.....	" " 280
Portraits of Three British Commanders: Sir William Howe, Sir Henry Clinton, and Lord Cornwallis...	" " 292
Washington after Crossing the Delaware.....	" " 308
An Early Morning Battle at Trenton.....	" " 314
"The Day Is Our Own!" (Battle of Princeton) .....	" " 320
Attacking the Chew Mansion, in the Battle of German- town .....	" " 340



# The Story-Life of Washington

---

## CHAPTER I

### WASHINGTON'S ANTECEDENTS

#### **Genealogy of the Washington Family**

The Washington family is of ancient English stock, the genealogy of which has been traced up to the century immediately succeeding the Conquest. At that time it was in the possession of landed estates and manorial privileges in the county of Durham, such as were enjoyed only by those or their descendants, who had come over from Normandy with the Conqueror, or fought under his standard. When William the Conqueror laid waste the whole country north of the Humber, in punishment of the insurrection of the Northumbrians, he apportioned the estates among his followers, and advanced Normans and other foreigners to the principal ecclesiastical dignities. One of the most wealthy and important sees was that of Durham. . . .

The princely prelate of Durham had his barons and knights, who held estates of him on feudal tenure, and were bound to serve him in peace and war. . . .

Among the knights who held estates in the palatinate on these warlike conditions was William de Hertburn, the progenitor of Washington. His Norman name of William would seem to point out his national descent; and the family long continued to have Norman names of baptism. The surname of De Hertburn was taken from a village in the palatinate, which he held of the bishop in knight's fee; probably the same now called Hartburn, on the banks of

the Tees. It had become a custom among the Norman families of rank, about the time of the Conquest, to take surnames from their castles or estates; it was not till some time afterwards that surnames became generally assumed by the people.

How or when the De Hertburns first acquired possession of their village is not known. They may have been companions in arms with Robert de Brus (or Bruce), a noble knight of Normandy, rewarded by William the Conqueror with great possessions in the North, and among others, with the lordships of Hert and Hertness in the county of Durham.

The first actual mention we find of the family is in the "Bolden Book," a record of all the lands appertaining to the diocese in 1183. In this it is stated that William de Hertburn had exchanged his village of Hertburn for the manor and village of Wessyngton. . . . The family changed its surname with its estate, and thenceforward assumed that of De Wessyngton.

When Richard Cœur de Lion put everything at pawn and sale to raise funds for a crusade to the Holy Land, . . . the De Wessyngtons might have followed the banner of St. Cuthbert to the holy wars.

Nearly seventy years afterwards we find the family still retaining its manorial estate in the palatinate. The names of Bondo de Wessyngton and William his son appear on charters of land, granted in 1257 to religious houses. . . . On the list of loyal knights who fought for their sovereign in the disastrous battle of Lewes (1264), in which the king was taken prisoner, we find the name of William Weshington, of Weshington. . . .

In the reign of Edward III we find the De Wessyngtons still mingling in chivalrous scenes. The name of Sir Stephen de Wessyngton appears on a list of knights (nobles chevaliers) who were to tilt at a tournament at Dunstable in 1334. He bore for his device a golden rose on an azure field. . . .

Such were the warlike and stately scenes in which the De Wessyngtons were called to mingle by their feudal duties as knights of the palatinate. A few years after the last event (1350) William, at that time lord of the manor of Wessyngton, had license to settle it and the village upon himself, his wife, and "his own right heirs." He died in 1367, and his son and heir William succeeded to the estate. The latter is mentioned under the name of Sir William de Weschington, as one of the knights who sat in the privy council of the county during the episcopate of John Fordham. . . .

For upwards of two hundred years the De Wessyngtons had now sat in the councils of the palatinate; had mingled with horse and hound in the stately hunts of its prelates, and followed the banner of St. Cuthbert to the field; but Sir William, just mentioned, was the last of the family that rendered this feudal service. He was the last male of the line to which the inheritance of the manor, by the license granted to his father, was confined. It passed away from the De Wessyngtons, after his death, by the marriage of his only daughter and heir, Dionisia, with Sir William Temple of Studley. By the year 1400 it had become the property of the Blaykestones.

But though the name of De Wessyngton no longer figured on the chivalrous roll of the palatinate, it continued for a time to flourish in the cloisters. In the year 1416, John de Wessyngton was elected prior of the Benedictine convent attached to the cathedral. . . .

Finally, after fighting divers good fights for the honor of his priory and filling the abbot's chair for thirty years, he died, to use an ancient phrase, "in all the odor of sanctity," in 1446, and was buried like a soldier on his battlefield, at the door of the north aisle of his church, near to the altar of St. Benedict. On his tombstone was an inscription in brass, now unfortunately obliterated, which may have set forth the valiant deeds of this Washington of the cloisters.

By this time the primitive stock of the De Wessyngtons had separated into divers branches, holding estates in various parts of England; some distinguishing themselves in the learned professions, others receiving knighthood for public services. Their names are to be found honorably recorded in county histories, or engraved on monuments in time-worn churches and cathedrals, those garnering places of English worthies. By degrees the seignorial sign of the *de* disappeared from before the family name, which also varied from Wessyngton to Wassington, Wasshington, and finally to Washington. A parish in the county of Durham bears the name as last written, and in this probably the ancient manor of Wessyngton was situated. There is another parish of the name in the county of Sussex.

The branch of the family to which our Washington immediately belongs sprang from Laurence Washington, Esquire, of Gray's Inn, son of John Washington, of Warton, in Lancashire. This Laurence Washington was for some time mayor of Northampton, and on the dissolution of the priories by Henry VIII he received, in 1538, a grant of the manor of Sulgrave, in Northamptonshire, with other lands in the vicinity, all confiscated property formerly belonging to the monastery of St. Andrew's.

Sulgrave remained in the family until 1620, and was commonly called "Washington's manor."

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. I, pp. 25 to 38.

### Early Ancestry of Washington's Mother

The courtly knight, Sir John Froissart, the famous chronicler of the time of the Plantagenets, drew with a brilliant pen a bold sketch of a "crazy preacher of Kent," as he called him, who was an irrepressible reformer, and a leader in Wat Tyler's rebellion against the nobility of England in the 14th century.

John Ball was the mad preacher. He was of the class of married priests so hated and harried by St. Dunstan

centuries before. A sturdy democrat—a prototype of the socialists and nihilists of our time—John Ball, for fully twenty years before he was silenced by the sharp and conclusive argument of the executioner's axe, had harangued the yeomen in Kentish churchyards, in market-places, and at fairs, always taking for his text his favorite couplet—

“When Adam delv'd and Eve span  
Who was then the gentleman?”

. . . Every Sunday, after mass, as the people came out of the church, they gathered about John Ball. On one of these occasions, he exclaimed, says the chronicler, “My good friends, things cannot go on well in England, nor ever will, until everything shall be in common; when there shall neither be vassal nor lord, and all distinctions leveled; when the lords shall be no more masters than ourselves. How ill they have used us, and for what reason do they thus hold us in bondage? Are we not all descended from the same parents, Adam and Eve? and what can they show, or what reasons give, why they should be more the masters than ourselves?—except, perhaps, in making us labor and work for them to spend in their pride. They are clothed in velvets and rich stuffs, ornamented with ermine and other furs, while we are forced to wear poor clothes. They have wines, spices, and fine bread, when we have only rye and the refuse of straw; and, if we drink, it must be water. They have handsome seats and manors, when we must brave the wind and rain in our labors in the field; but it is from our labor they have wherewith to support their pomp. We are called slaves; and if we do not perform our services, we are beaten, and we have not any sovereign to whom we can complain, or who wishes to hear us and do justice.”

The people murmured, “John Ball speaks the truth.” But for these utterances he was imprisoned by the Archbishop of Canterbury. This act, and an unjust tax levied at about that time, set England ablaze, from sea to sea,

with popular indignation. A hundred thousand Kentish men and others led by Wat Tyler and Jack Straw, entered Canterbury (1381), plundered the Archbishop's palace, took John Ball from prison, and set him on a horse as their leader, and pressed on towards London, killing every lawyer by the way—"for not till they are killed will the land enjoy freedom," shouted the peasants. They sang doggerel ditties, many of them composed by John Ball, which were scattered among the people to arouse them to revolt.

One of them ran thus:

"John Ball, Greeteth you all,  
And doth for to Understand he hath rung your Bell,  
Now Right and Might, Will and Skill,  
God speed every Dele.  
Now reigneth Pride in Price,  
And Covetise is counted Wise,  
And Lechery without Shame,  
And Gluttony without Blame," etc.

. . . King Richard II, just enthroned, was then a lad of sixteen. Advised by his mother, he acted wisely, though deceitfully, at this crisis, in quelling the insurrection, by meeting the malcontents face to face.

"We will," shouted the insurgent peasants, "that you free us forever, we and our lands, and that we be never named or held as serfs."

"I grant it," cried Richard; and he bade them go home, pledging himself to issue charters and forgiveness, a pledge intended to be broken. The insurgents dispersed, all but about thirty thousand who remained with Wat Tyler to watch over the fulfilment of the royal pledge. A quarrel with the mayor of London brought on a conflict. Wat Tyler was killed, John Ball and Jack Straw were seized, and their heads (cut off by the king's command) were, with Tyler's, displayed upon pikes on London Bridge.

. . . What has all this to do with Mary, the mother of



Washington? it may be asked. Much—it may be *very* much. Possibly the democratic spirit of our beloved patriot was inherited through a long line of ancestry from the “mad preacher of Kent.” Washington’s mother was Mary Ball, of English descent, the second wife of his father, and there are weighty reasons for believing that she was a lineal descendant from John Ball, the mediæval champion of the rights of man.

*Mary and Martha*, Benson J. Lossing, LL. D., pp. 1 to 6.

### Two Ancestral Homes

Of the many thousands of Americans who throng to Stratford every year, perhaps only a small number are aware that the ancestral home of the Washingtons is only a few miles away. Still smaller is the number who make a pilgrimage to Sulgrave or to Brington, ten miles further, though the memories and traditions of these places are so closely connected with the ancestors of the Father of his Country. True, his stately home by the Potomac is not neglected by his countrymen, but every American should be deeply interested in the English forefathers of the man who more than any other, freed them from the “rule of kings.” . . .

We turned into a narrow byway leading to Wormleighton, in whose ancient church there are records chronicling the marriage of Robert Washington in 1565 and the birth of his son George in 1608, antedating his famous namesake in America by more than a century. It would even now be hard to follow on the map this maze of byroads which we threaded, winding between hawthorn hedges or gliding beneath the overarching branches of ancient elms; . . . and leading through villages the very embodiment of quiet and repose. And Sulgrave, the cradle of the Washingtons, seemed the sleepest and loneliest of them all—a gray, straggling hamlet with only here and there a dash of color from flower-beds or vivid walls, looking much as

it must have looked when the last Washington was Lord of the Manor, more than three hundred years ago. . . .

A little to one side of the village they pointed out the "Washington House," and we followed a stony path leading into the farmyard, where the good man was just stabling his horses. A typical country woman—of the tenant class—warmly welcomed us at Sulgrave Manor. . . .

We were shown every nook and corner of the curious old house—not an extensive or imposing one, but three hundred years ago domestic accommodations were not elaborate even in the homes of the nobility, and while the Washingtons ranked high among the gentry, they did not possess a title. The house has not been greatly altered, in outward appearance, at least; . . . fortunately, the thick stone wall and heavy oaken beams yield but slowly to time's ravages. The most imposing feature is the solid black-oak staircase with its curiously twisted banisters. . . . Nothing, however, impresses the American visitor so much as the Washington coat-of-arms executed in plaster in one of the gables by the ancient owner. This had suffered much from the weather, but has lately been protected by a glass covering. The outer walls were originally covered with plaster, but this has fallen away in many places, showing the rough stone underneath; and elsewhere masses of ivy half hide the small, square-paned windows. . . . We followed the rough cobblestone walk to the church door, but could not gain admittance until the caretaker was found, for Sulgrave Church has been kept strictly under lock and key ever since one of the Washington brasses was stolen—by an American, of course—a few years ago. It is a small, rough, lichen-covered building, much restored, even to the stolen brass tablet to the memory of the first Lawrence Washington. . . .

The story of Sulgrave's connection with the Washingtons is not common and a short sketch may not be amiss. In the reign of Henry VIII, Lawrence Washington was mayor of Northampton and a gentleman

of consequence. Sulgrave was among the confiscated church lands that the king was offering at bargain prices, and Washington purchased it for three hundred pounds. . . . His grandson, another Lawrence Washington, was forced by adverse circumstances to sell the estate. . . . This grandson, with a large family, removed about 1606—the exact date is doubtful—to Little Brington, some ten miles to the northeast of Sulgrave, where he was given a house, it is thought by the Earl of Spencer, to which noble family the Washingtons were related by marriage. The Lawrence Washington who is buried in Great Brington Church was the great-great-grandfather of the “first American.”

. . . . We paused . . . in front of Great Brington Church to which we gained admission. . . . The chief Washington memorials are the brasses—the inscription and coat-of-arms—over the grave of Lawrence Washington of Sulgrave and Brington, and these have been sunk deep in the stone slab and are guarded by lock and key. . . .

Half a mile from Great Brington is Little Brington, where we saw the Washington house, . . . with only a few touches, mullioned windows and carvings, to distinguish it from the cottages of the village tenantry. There is a world of pathos in the inscription cut in the stone tablet above the doorway, “The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away, Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

*In Unfamiliar England, Thos. D. Murphy, pp. 40 to 46.*

### Some Ancestral Fighters

One of the direct descendants of the grantee of Sulgrave was Sir William Washington, of Packington, in the county of Kent. He married a sister of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, the unfortunate favorite of Charles I. This may have attached the Sulgrave Washingtons to the Stuart dynasty, to which they adhered loyally and generously throughout all its vicissitudes. One of the family,

Lieutenant-colonel James Washington, took up arms in the cause of King Charles, and lost his life in the siege of Pontefract castle. Another of the Sulgrave line, Sir Henry Washington, son and heir of Sir William, before mentioned, exhibited in the civil wars the old chivalrous spirit of the knights of the palatinate. He served under Prince Rupert at the storming of Bristol, in 1643, and when the assailants were beaten off at every point, he broke in with a handful of infantry at a weak part of the wall, made room for the horse to follow, and opened a path to victory.

He distinguished himself still more in 1646, when elevated to the command of Worcester, the governor having been captured by the enemy. It was a time of confusion and dismay. The king had fled from Oxford in disguise and gone to the parliamentary camp at Newark. The royal cause was desperate. In this crisis Sir Henry received a letter from Fairfax, who, with his victorious army, was at Haddington, demanding the surrender of Worcester. The following was Colonel Washington's reply:

"*Sir*.—It is acknowledged by your books and by report of your own quarter, that the king is in some of your armies. That granted, it may be easy for you to procure his Majesty's commands for the disposal of this garrison. Till then I shall make good the trust reposed in me. As for conditions, if I shall be necessitated, I shall make the best I can. The worst I know and fear not; if I had, the profession of a soldier had not begun, nor so long continued by your Excellency's humble servant,

"HENRY WASHINGTON".

In a few days Colonel Whalley invested the city with five thousand troops. Sir Henry dispatched messenger after messenger in quest of the king to know his pleasure. None of them returned. A female emissary was equally unavailing. Week after week elapsed, until nearly three months had expired. Provisions began to fail. The city was in confusion. The troops grew insubordinate. Yet Sir Henry persisted in the defense. General Fairfax, with 1,500 horse, and foot, was daily expected. There was not powder enough

for an hour's contest should the city be stormed. Still Sir Henry "awaited His Majesty's commands."

At length news arrived that the king had issued an order for the surrender of all towns, castles, and forts. A printed copy of the order was shown to Sir Henry, and on the faith of that document he capitulated (19th July, 1646) on honorable terms, won by his fortitude and perseverance. Those who believe in hereditary virtues may see foreshadowed in the conduct of this Washington of Worcester, the magnanimous constancy of purpose, the disposition to "hope against hope," which bore our Washington triumphantly through the darkest days of our Revolution.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. I, p. 39.

### Part of His Pedigree

Although Washington wrote that the history of his ancestors was, in his opinion, "of very little moment," and "a subject to which I confess I have paid very little attention," few Americans can prove a better pedigree. The earliest of his forbears yet discovered was described as "gentleman," the family were granted lands by Henry the Eighth, held various offices of honor, married into good families, and under the Stuarts two were knighted and a third served as page to Prince Charles. Lawrence, a brother of the three thus distinguished, matriculated at Oxford as a "generosi filius" (the intermediate class between sons of the nobility, "armigeri filius," and of the people, "plebei filius"), or as of the minor gentry. In time he became a fellow and lector of Brasenose College, and presently obtained the good living of Purleigh. Strong royalists, the fortunes of the family waned along with King Charles, and sank into insignificance with the passing of the Stuart dynasty. Not the least sufferer was the rector of Purleigh, for the Puritan Parliament ejected him from his living, on the charge "that he was a common frequenter of ale-houses, not only himself sitting dayly

tippling there, . . . but hath oft been drunk,"—a charge indignantly denied by the royalists, who asserted that he was a "worthy Pious man, . . . always . . . a very Modest, Sober Person"; and this latter claim is supported by the fact that though the Puritans sequestered the rich living, they made no objection to his serving as rector at Brixted Parva, where the living was "such a Poor and Miserable one that it was always with difficulty that any one was persuaded to accept of it."

*The True George Washington*, Paul Leicester Ford, p. 15.

### American Ancestry

We have little note of the Sulgrave branch of the family after the death of Charles I and the exile of his successor. England, during the Protectorate, became an uncomfortable residence to such as had signalized themselves as adherents to the house of Stuart. In 1655, an attempt at a general insurrection drew on them the vengeance of Cromwell. Many of their party who had no share in the conspiracy, yet sought refuge in other lands, where they might live free from molestation. This may have been the case with the two brothers, John and Andrew [Lawrence] Washington, great-grandsons of the grantee of Sulgrave, and uncles of Sir Henry, the gallant defender of Worcester. John had for some time resided in South Cave, in the East Riding of Yorkshire; but now emigrated with his brother to Virginia, which colony, from its allegiance to the exiled monarch and the Anglican Church had become a favorite resort of the Cavaliers. The brothers arrived in Virginia in 1657, and purchased land in Westmoreland County, on the Northern Neck, between the Potomac and Rappahannock rivers. John married a Miss Anne Pope, of the same county, and took up his residence on Bridges' Creek, near where it falls into the Potomac. He became an extensive planter, and in process of time, a magistrate and member of the House of Burgesses.

Having a spark of the old military fire of the family, we find him, as Colonel Washington, leading the Virginia forces, in coöperation with those of Maryland, against a band of Seneca Indians, who were ravaging the settlements along the Potomac. In honor of his public and private virtues the parish in which he resided was called after him, and still bears the name of Washington. He lies buried in a vault on Bridges' Creek, which, for generations, was the family place of sepulture.

The estate continued in the family. His grandson Augustine, the father of our Washington, was born there in 1694. He was twice married; first (April 20, 1715), to Jane, daughter of Caleb Butler, Esq., of Westmoreland County, by whom he had four children, of whom only two, Lawrence and Augustine, survived the years of childhood; their mother died November 24, 1728, and was buried in the family vault.

On the 6th of March, 1730, he married in second nuptials, Mary, the daughter of Colonel Ball, a young and beautiful girl, said to be the belle of the Northern Neck. By her he had four sons, George, Samuel, John Augustine, and Charles; and two daughters, Elizabeth, or Betty, as she was commonly called, and Mildred, who died in infancy.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. I, p. 41.

### Two Letters about a Mary Ball

I have met with only two allusions, in writing, to Mary Ball before her marriage. These were in fragments of letters found in a deserted mansion near the York River during the late Civil War, and sent to me in a small package of other old papers of no real value. One of these letters, written in a feminine hand, dated "Wms Burg, ye 7th of Octr, 1722," began as follows:

"*Dear Sukey*:—Madam Ball of Lancaster and Her Sweet Molly have gone Hom. Mamma thinks Molly the

Comliest Maiden She Knows. She is about 16 yrs old, is taller than Me, is verry Sensable, Modest and Loving. Her Hair is like unto Flax, Her Eyes are the color of Yours and her Chekes are like May blossoms. I wish you could see her."

The other letter was written by "Lizzie Burwell" to a friend. It was so torn and faded as to be almost illegible; only the subjoined part of a sentence could be deciphered:

"—understand Molly Ball is going Home with her Brother a Lawyer, who lives in England. Her Mother is Dead three Months ago, and her Sister"—

Here a fragment of the letter was torn off, together with all the superscription excepting "Miss Nelly Car—." At the top of the letter were the words, "tank, May ye 15th, 1728."

This is the sum of my information concerning Mary Ball before her marriage, when she was about twenty-four years of age.

*Mary and Martha, Benson J. Lossing, p. 11.*

### **Mary the Mother of Washington**

Very little is known of the youth and early womanhood of Mary Ball. Her father appears to have been a well-to-do planter on the left bank of the Rappahannock River, near where, a broad stream, its fresh waters commingled with the brine of the Chesapeake Bay. He was a vestryman of Christ Church, in Lancaster. In a fragment of a list of contributions for the support of the minister of that parish (Rev. John Bell) in 1712, is the following entry: "Joseph Ball, £5"—a considerable sum for a Virginia planter at that time to give for such a purpose. He was commissioned a colonel by Gov. Alexander Spotswood, and was known as "Colonel Ball of Lancaster," to distinguish him from another Colonel Ball, his cousin.



Mary Ball seems to have grown to womanhood in the serene and healthful seclusion of a well-ordered home in a sparsely settled country. Like most of the girls in the colony at that time, her attainments in "book" learning must have been acquired under the parental roof, for early in the last century schools were almost unknown in that part of our country. Governor Berkeley had, half a century before, thanked God there were no free schools nor a printing-press in Virginia, and hoped there would not be in a hundred years.

When Mary Ball was about seventeen years of age she wrote to her brother abroad on family matters, and concluded her letter as follows:

"We have not had a schoolmaster in our neighborhood until now (January 14, 1723) in nearly four years. We have now a young minister living with us, who was educated at Oxford, took orders, and came over as assistant to Rev. Kemp, at Gloucester. That parish is too poor to keep both, and he teaches school for his board. He teaches Susie and me and Madam Carter's boy and two girls. I am now learning pretty fast. Mama and Susie and I all send love to you and Mary. This from your loving sister, Mary Ball."

The education of Mary was evidently defective, but not more so than that of the average young woman of her class. While her chirography was plain and business-like in character, her orthography was very defective, even late in life. But her career indicates that she had received at home an education for the higher duties of life, of far greater value and importance than any taught in schools. From her mother, who died in 1728, after a widowhood of many years, she had doubtless inherited the noblest qualities of mind and heart, and had been taught all those domestic virtues of which contemporary testimony and tradition tell us she was a bright exemplar—industry, frugality, integrity, strength of will and purpose, obedient to the behests of duty, faithfulness, and modesty, with deep

religious convictions. She was strengthened by an abiding faith in the Divine promises which made Mary, the mother of Washington, a model woman, and yet

"A creature not too bright or good  
For human nature's daily food."

*Mary and Martha, Benson J. Lossing, pp. 8 to 11.*

### Conjectures about Washington's Father and Mother

Augustine Washington was born in 1694, and at the age of twenty-one years married Jane, daughter of Caleb Butler, of Westmoreland County. They had four children—three sons and one daughter; Butler, who died in infancy, Lawrence, Augustine, and Jane, the latter dying in early childhood. Their mother died in November, 1728, when her husband was about thirty-four years of age.

In 1792, President Washington, by request, sent to Sir Isaac Heard, Garter King of Arms, in London, a genealogical table of the Washington family in Virginia. In it occur these words:

"Jane, wife of Augustine [Washington], died November 24, 1728, and was buried in the family vault at Bridges' Creek. Augustine then married Mary Ball, March 6, 1730."

No hint is given as to *where* this marriage took place, nor is there any known record extant that can answer the question, Where were Augustine and Mary Ball wedded? There is no tradition that can answer, excepting that given by Mr. Harvey that they were married in England.

We have observed an intimation in a fragment of a letter . . . that Mary Ball went to England with her brother in 1728, and Mr. Harvey ascertained at Cookham that Augustine Washington was there in 1729; also that families of Washington and Balls had lived there and been buried there. He also ascertained that Augustine Washington tarried there to effect the sale of some property he had fallen heir to. In Virginia the Washington and Ball

families lived in adjoining counties, and were doubtless personally acquainted with each other. The question naturally arises, "May not Augustine Washington and Mary Ball have met in England and married there?" . . .

Where was Washington born and baptized? There is no known official record that can solve the question. There is no tradition that helps to solve it, excepting the statement of Washington quoted above, and that of Mrs. Morer, who says he was born in Cookham, and was carried to America in the arms of either her "aunt or mother." How trustworthy is the tradition of the latter, let us see.

Mrs. Morer died in 1812, eighty years after the birth of Washington. She must have been a very young child when, as she says, her "aunt or mother" went to America as a nurse for him—too young, too, to be the likely recipient, as she says she was, of the portrait of Mary Ball and "other relicks of the [Washington] family." Mr. Field was born in 1777. He received the story from Mrs. Morer's lips when he was "a boy," say eighteen years of age, when according to her narrative, she must have been fully seventy-five years old. Would any court receive testimony of this nature as trustworthy?

It lacked only about a month of being two years from the time of the marriage of Washington's parents until his birth, or fully three years after his father went to England. Augustine had left in Virginia his large estate and various concerns, and his two sons, one about seven years and the other about nine years of age. Would he be likely to remain abroad so long, neglectful of his family and estate, to receive and dispose of some property in England which he had inherited?

Does it not seem probable that Augustine Washington and Mary Ball were *married* in England, and after tarrying there awhile to dispose of some property, returned to Virginia, where their first child was born and baptized, two years after the wedding?

### Mary Washington's First Home

The home plantation of Augustine Washington stretched along the Potomac River more than a mile between Pope's and Bridges' creeks. The river is there a broad stream, and was then largely fringed by the primeval forest. Its waters abounded with the choicest fishes. This farm of a thousand acres was in the northern part of Westmoreland County, a narrow shire afterwards distinguished as the birthplace of two Presidents of the United States (Washington and Monroe) and of several Lees who were prominent actors in the early history of our republic. Of these, Richard Henry Lee, author of the resolution for independence offered in the Congress in 1776; Arthur Lee, M.D., a diplomatic agent for the Continental Congress abroad; and "Legion Harry," a brave and dashing young cavalry leader in the old war for independence, were the most conspicuous.

The dwelling to which Mr. Washington took his young wife was a very modest one, yet it ranked among the best of Virginia farm houses at that time. It had four rooms and a spacious attic, with an enormous chimney at each end. On the river front was a piazza. It was perfectly plain at all points. The only approach to ornamentation was a Dutch tiled chimney-piece in the "best room."

The bride found at her new home a middle-aged kinswoman of her husband in charge of his two fine boys, Lawrence and Augustine. There was an ample supply of men and women servants. The rooms were neatly furnished, and in one of them was a small collection of books, chiefly devotional in character. Among them was a copy of Sir Matthew Hale's "Contemplations, Moral and Divine," on the fly-leaf of which Augustine's first wife had written her name in bold characters. Immediately under this signature the new mistress of the household wrote "and Mary Washington," in an equally bold hand. I saw this volume and copied the signatures many years ago, at Mount Vernon.

---

From that volume the mother of Washington undoubtedly drew, as from a living well of sweet water, many of the maxims which she instilled into the mind of her first-born, who became illustrious. It was in this modest home on the banks of the Potomac that Mary Washington gave birth to that son in the winter of 1732.

*Mary and Martha*, Benson J. Lossing, p. 27.

## CHAPTER II

### GEORGE AND HIS FATHER

#### His Birth

My father, Augustine, was born in 1694, on the plantation known as Wakefield, granted in 1667, to his grandfather, and lying between the Bridges' and Pope's creeks, in Westmoreland, on the north neck between the Potomac and the Rappahannock. My father, in his will, says: "Forasmuch as my several children in this my will mentioned, being by several Ventures, cannot inherit from one another," etc.

What he speaks of as his "Ventures" were his two marriages. A venture does appear to me to be an appropriate name for the uncertain state of matrimony. The first "venture" was Jane Butler, who lies buried at Wakefield. Of her four children two survived; that is, my half-brothers Lawrence and Augustine, whom we called Austin. I was the first child of my father's second "venture," and my mother was Mary Ball. I was born at Wakefield, on February 11 (O. S.), 1732, about ten in the morning. I was baptized in the Pope's Creek church, and had two godfathers and one godmother, Mildred Gregory. Mr. Beverly Whiting and Mr. Christopher Brooks were my godfathers. I do not recall ever seeing Mr. Whiting, although his son, of the same name, I met in after years. Of Mr. Brooks I know nothing, nor do I know which one of the two gave me the silver cups which it was then the custom for the godfather to give to the godson. I still have them. I was told by a silversmith in Philadelphia that the cups are of Irish make, and of about 1720. There were six of these mugs, in order to be used for punch when the child grew up.

*The Youth of Washington, Told in the Form of an Autobiography, S. Weir Mitchell, M. D., p. 22.*

### Parson Weems

Several of the most famous tales of Washington's boyhood are told by an odd character known as Parson Weems, who preached in Powick church for a while after the war. Washington attended this church, and he and his wife often entertained Weems in their hospitable house. As the odd parson no doubt gossiped with all the old people about the neighborhood, he had a good chance to pick up many anecdotes about the great man's childhood. Unfortunately, Parson Weems was more fond of a good story than of the strict truth. Having a large family to support, he left off preaching and became a book peddler. He rode about in an old-fashioned gig, selling his own writings and those of others. He told so many amusing stories and played the fiddle so well, that he was a very successful peddler. He would enter a bar-room with a temperance tract he had written, and mimic a drunken man so perfectly that he had no trouble in selling his tracts to the laughing crowd. It is told of Weems that he once fiddled for a dance from behind a screen, lest people should be shocked to see a parson fiddling in such a place. The screen fell over, however, and revealed the fiddling preacher, to the great amusement of the crowd. The odd old parson wrote a life of Washington, in which he told some stories of the great man's boyhood which he said he had learned from an old lady who was a cousin of the family and had visited, when she was a girl, in the house of Mr. Augustine Washington. The stories are not improbable in themselves, and are doubted only because they are told by the queer parson, who loved a good story too well.

*The Story of Washington*, Elizabeth Eggleston Seelye, p. 6.

### Little George and the Sin of Selfishness

To assist his son to overcome that selfish spirit, which too often leads children to fret and fight about trifles, was

a notable care of Mr. Washington. For this purpose, of all the presents, such as cakes, fruit, etc., he received, he was always desired to give a liberal part to his playmates. To enable him to do this with more alacrity, his father would remind him of the love which he would thereby gain, and the frequent presents which would in return be made to him; and also would tell of that great and good God, who delights above all things to see children love one another, and will assuredly reward them for acting so amiable a part.

Some idea of Mr. Washington's plan of education in this respect, may be collected from the following anecdote, related to me twenty years ago by an aged lady, who was a distant relative, and, when a girl, spent much of her time in the family:

"On a fine morning," said she, "in the fall of 1737, Mr. Washington, having little George by the hand, came to the door and asked my cousin . . . and myself to walk with him to the orchard, promising he would show us a fine sight. On arriving at the orchard, we were presented with a fine sight indeed. The whole earth, as far as we could see, was strewed with fruit: and yet the trees were bending under the weight of apples, which hung in clusters like grapes, and vainly strove to hide their blushing cheeks behind the green leaves.

"'Now, George,' said his father, 'look here, my son! don't you remember when this good cousin of yours brought you that fine large apple last spring, how hardly I could prevail on you to divide with your brothers and sisters; though I promised you that if you would but do it, God Almighty would give you plenty of apples this fall.'

"Poor George could not say a word; but hanging down his head, looked quite confused, while with his little naked toes he scratched in the soft ground.

"'Now look up, my son,' continued his father, 'look up, George! and see there how richly the blessed God has made good my promise to you. Wherever you turn your



eyes you see the trees loaded down with fine fruit; many of them indeed breaking down; while the ground is covered with mellow apples, more than you could eat, my son, in all your life time.'

"George looked in silence on the wide wilderness of fruit. He marked the busy humming bees, and heard the gay notes of birds; then lifting his eyes, filled with shining moisture, to his father, he softly said:

"'Well, Pa, only forgive me this time; and see if I ever be so stingy any more.'"

*The Life of George Washington, with Curious Anecdotes, Rev. M. L. Weems, p. 12.*

### **The Moral and Entertaining Story of the Little Hatchet**

Never did the wise Ulysses take more pains with his beloved Telemachus, than did Mr. Washington with George, to inspire him with an early love of truth.

"Truth, George," said he, "is the loveliest quality of youth. I would ride fifty miles, my son, to see the little boy whose heart is so honest, and his lips so pure, that we may depend on every word he says. O how lovely does such a child appear in the eyes of everybody! His parents dote on him. His relations glory in him. They are constantly praising him to their children, whom they beg to imitate him. They are often sending for him to visit them; and receive him, when he comes, with as much joy as if he were a little angel, come to set pretty examples to their children.

"But, oh! how different, George, is the case with the boy who is so given to lying that nobody can believe a word he says! He is looked at with aversion wherever he goes, and parents dread to see him come among their children. Oh, George! my son! rather than see you come to this pass, dear as you are to my heart, gladly would I assist to nail you up in your little coffin, and follow you to your grave. Hard, indeed, would it be to me to give up my son, whose little feet are always so ready to run about with me, and

whose fondly looking eyes, and sweet prattle make so large a part of my happiness. But still I would give him up, rather than see him a common liar."

"Pa," said George very seriously, "do I ever tell lies?"

"No, George, I thank God you do not, my son; and I rejoice in the hope you never will. At least, you shall never, from me, have cause to be guilty of so shameful a thing. Many parents, indeed, even compel their children to this vile practice, by barbarously beating them for every little fault: hence, on the next offence, the terrified little creature slips out a lie, just to escape the rod. But as to yourself, George, you know I have always told you, and now tell you again, that, whenever by accident, you do anything wrong, which must often be the case, as you are but a poor little boy yet, without experience or knowledge, you must never tell a falsehood to conceal it; but come bravely up, my son, like a little man, and tell me of it: and, instead of beating you, George, I will but the more honour and love you for it, my dear."

This, you'll say, was sowing good seed! . . . Yes, it was: and the crop, thank God, was, as I believe it ever will be, where a man acts the true parent, that is, the Guardian Angel, by his child.

The following anecdote is a case in point. It is too valuable to be lost, and too true to be doubted; for it was communicated to me by the same excellent lady to whom I am indebted for the last.

"When George," said she, "was about six years old, he was made the wealthy master of a hatchet, of which, like most little boys, he was immoderately fond, and was constantly going about chopping everything that came in his way. One day, in the garden, where he often amused himself hacking his mother's pea-sticks, he unluckily tried the edge of his hatchet on the body of a beautiful young English cherry-tree, which he barked so terribly that I don't believe the tree ever got the better of it. The next morning the

old gentleman, finding out what had befallen his tree, which, by the by, was a great favourite, came into the house; and with much warmth asked for the mischievous author, declaring at the same time, that he would not have taken five guineas for his tree. Nobody could tell him anything about it. Presently George and his hatchet made their appearance. 'George,' said his father, 'do you know who killed that beautiful little cherry-tree yonder in the garden?'

"This was a tough question; and George staggered under it for a moment; but quickly recovered himself; and looking at his father, with the sweet face of youth brightened with the inexpressible charm of all-conquering truth, he bravely cried out,

"'I can't tell a lie, Pa; you know I can't tell a lie. I did cut it with my hatchet.'

"'Run to my arms, you dearest boy,' cried his father in transports, 'run to my arms; glad am I, George, that you killed my tree; for you have paid me for it a thousand fold. Such an act of heroism in my son is more worth than a thousand trees, though blossomed with silver, and their fruits of purest gold.'"

*The Life of George Washington, with Curious Anecdotes, Rev. M. L. Weems, p. 14.*

### The Father's True Moral Stature

So little, however, has the character of Washington's father been considered according to scientific and sociological methods that his only prominence has been due to a little affair about a cherry-tree, and even regarding this his true moral stature has not been properly estimated. A young cherry-tree appeared from widely different standpoints to father and son in the Washington family. To any boy with a hatchet a young cherry-tree says "come and cut me," as distinctly as the rear elevation of a dandy says "come and kick me" to a well-shod man whose brains are in his head. A young cherry-tree is as straight as a

ramrod, its bark is smooth and glistening to a degree unattainable by any other bark, and its whole appearance is unspeakably, exasperatingly self-sufficient. George humbled the pride of his father's pet cherry-tree; and every boy who has ever indulged in hatchet practice upon similar woody growth knows that he did it with a single vigorous blow. But to his father, living in a new country and three thousand miles away from the land of good nurseries or desirable stock from which to graft, the loss of the tree was serious. So when the little boy told the truth, and the father said that he would rather have lost a thousand cherry-trees than have his son tell a lie, he exhibited a spirit which, while utterly antiquated and unbusinesslike, was simply colossal in its moral proportions. Were any father to talk like that in the present age, he could never hope to get his son a situation even as an office boy; but those days were not these days, when absolute truthfulness is the most discouraging of business vices.

*George Washington, John Habberton, p. 4.*

### **What George's "Pa" Did to Startle Him**

It was in this way by interesting at once his heart and head, that Mr. Washington conducted George with great ease and pleasure along the happy paths of virtue. But well knowing that his beloved charge, soon to be a man, would be left exposed to numberless temptations, both from himself and from others, his heart throbbed with the tenderest anxiety to make him acquainted with that great Being, whom to know and love is to possess the surest defence against vice, and the best of all motives to virtue and happiness. To startle George into a lively sense of his Maker, he hit upon the following very curious but impressive expedient:

One day he went into the garden, and prepared a little bed of finely pulverized earth, on which he wrote George's name at full, in large letters—then strewing in plenty of

cabbage seed, he covered them up, and smoothed all over nicely with the roller. This bed he purposely prepared close alongside of a gooseberry walk, which happening at this time to be well hung with ripe fruit, he knew would be honoured with George's visits pretty regularly every day. Not many mornings had passed away before in came George, with eyes wild rolling, and his little cheeks ready to burst with great news.

"O Pa! come here! come here!"

"What's the matter, my son? what's the matter?"

"O come here, I tell you, Pa: come here! and I'll show you such a sight as you never saw in all your lifetime."

The old gentleman suspecting what George would be at, gave him his hand, which he seized with great eagerness, and tugging him along through the garden, led him point blank to the bed whereon was inscribed, in large letters, and in all the freshness of newly sprung plants, the full name of

### GEORGE WASHINGTON

"There, Pa?" said George, quite in an ecstasy of astonishment, "did you ever see such a sight in all your lifetime?"

"Why it seems like a curious affair, sure enough, George!"

"But, Pa, who did make it there? who did make it there?"

"It grew there by chance, I suppose, my son."

"By chance, Pa! O no! no! it never did grow there by chance, Pa. Indeed that it never did!"

"High! why not, my son?"

"Why Pa, did you ever see anybody's name in a plant bed before?"

"Well, but George, such a thing might happen, though you never saw it before."

"Yes, Pa, but I did never see the little plants grow

up so as to make one single letter of my name before. Now, how could they grow up so as to make all the letters of my name, and then standing one after another, to spell my name so exactly—and all so neat and even too, at top and bottom! O Pa, you must not say chance did all this. Indeed somebody did it; and I daresay now, Pa, you did it just to scare me, because I am your little boy.”

His father smiled, and said, “Well, George, you have guessed right. I indeed did it; but not to scare you, my son; but to learn you a great thing which I wish you to understand. I want, my son, to introduce you to your true Father.”

“High, Pa, ain’t you my true father, that has loved me, and been so good to me always?”

“Yes, George, I am your father, as the world calls it; and I love you very dearly too. But yet with all my love for you, George, I am but a poor good-for-nothing sort of a father in comparison of one you have.”

“Aye! I know well enough whom you mean, Pa. You mean God Almighty; don’t you?”

“Yes, my son, I mean Him indeed. He is your true Father, George.”

*The Life of George Washington, with Curious Anecdotes, Rev. M. L. Weems, p. 16.*

### **Giving up the Leading-rein**

So deeply immersed was Mary Washington in considerations and apprehensions that she failed to notice George, who was quietly gathering up the straggling leading-rein, unbuckling its fastening, and tucking it into a pocket beneath the flap of his saddle.

Suddenly she remembered that she had not resumed her hold of the long strap. “Have you lost the leading-rein, George?” she asked, looking round at him.

“No, ma’am,” he replied, straightening himself and meeting her eye with his proud, steady look, “but I think we shall need it no more.”

"Give it to me," said Mary calmly.

His little face set itself in hard lines, strangely like those on his mother's countenance.

"I can do without it now," he said.

"That is for me to judge," was her reply, and she held out her hand. They were walking their horses, all needing a breathing spell after the recent excitements.

George's lip quivered, but he pulled the strap out from its hiding-place and handed it to his mother.

"My son," she said, "when a brave man hath earned promotion, it is his commander who shall confer it." And she flung the strap over the hedge.

He turned to her with a passion of joy in his face. "Thank you, ma'am," he said, and then added, stretching out his hand to touch her, "I shall trust you next time, mamma."

And then it was Mary who felt that she had been promoted.

*In the Shadow of the Lord, Mrs. Hugh Fraser, p. 174.*

### Little George Washington

Every one of my little children has seen a picture of George Washington, I am sure.

Of course all these are pictures of a strong, handsome, grown-up man, and I suppose you never happened to think that George Washington was once a little boy.

But ever so long ago he was as small as you are now, and I am going to tell you about his father and mother, his home and his little-boy days.

He was born one hundred and sixty years ago in Virginia, near a great river called the Potomac. His father's name was Augustine, his mother's Mary, and he had several brothers and a little sister.

They all lived in the country, on a farm, or a plantation, as they called it in Virginia. The Washington house stood in the middle of green tobacco fields and flowery meadows,

and there were so many barns and storehouses and sheds round about it that they made quite a village of themselves. The nearest neighbors lived miles away; there were no railroads nor stages, and if you wanted to travel, you must ride on horseback through the thick woods, or you might sail in little boats up and down the rivers.

City boys and girls might think, perhaps, that little George Washington was very lonely on the great plantation, with no neighbor-boys to play with; but you must remember that the horses and cattle and sheep and dogs on a farm make the dearest of playmates, and that there are all kinds of pleasant things to do in the country that city boys know nothing about.

Little George played out of doors all the time and grew very strong. He went fishing and swimming in the great river, he ran races and jumped fences with his brothers and the dogs, he threw stones across the brooks and when he grew a larger boy he even learned to shoot.

He had a pretty pony, too, named "Hero," that he loved very much, and that he used to ride all about the plantation.

Some of the letters have been kept that he wrote when he was a little boy, and he talks in them about his pony, and his books with pictures of elephants, and the new top he is going to have soon.

Think of that great General Washington on a white horse once playing with a little humming top like yours.

*The Story Hour, Nora A. Smith, p. 115.*

### **"Advantages" George Was Spared**

Much of the credit for the character of the embryo savior of the country may be attributed to the freedom of his early life and the lack of unnatural repression. He was allowed to see a house on fire without surreptitiously following an engine and being punished on his return, for the family mansion was burned to the ground while he was



a mere boy. He could go fishing along the banks of a brook without stumbling over two or three thousand other boys and men similarly employed, and in the creek that flowed past his house no detestable factory or oil-refinery refuse had driven away all the fish but suckers. He could take a header into deep water anywhere, without being chased away by a policeman. There were no graded schools to force him into forgetting all that he had learned at home, nor any truancy agents to pounce upon him from innocent looking doorways as he strolled cheerily along thinking deeply about nothing in particular. He was fond of throwing stones; but as there were no tramps or lightning-rod men in the country in his day, he practised at throwing across the Rappahannock River.

He was spared the debilitating influence of goody-goody books; neither were there any dime novels, so he never learned to adore a man for his vices. Toy-shops and candy-stores were likewise unknown, so the little fellow was obliged to find his diversions out of doors, and how ably he did it may be inferred from the superb physical and moral manhood that he displayed during his entire subsequent life.

Washington attended such schools as the country afforded; but as natural science in those days was considered first cousin to witchcraft, text-books in geography and history were unknown, and grammar had not begun to shorten human life, his education was restricted to the three R's—readin', 'ritin', and 'rithmetic. His own writings, at every stage of his career, prove beyond the possibility of a doubt that he never saw a spelling-book, and that the country spelling school had not been introduced into Virginia. That he did not learn to spell, is of no particular consequence; but that he missed the unequalled facilities for innocent flirtation which the spelling-school affords to the young people of a sparsely settled country, is a matter for national regret, for to this privation must

be attributed that defect in his early education which gave his strong and handsome face an expression of solemnity.

*George Washington*, John Habberton, p. 5.

### Schools in Virginia

There were no good schools in Virginia at that time. In fact, the people did not care much about learning.

There were few educated men besides the parsons, and even some of the parsons were very ignorant.

It was the custom of some of the richest families to send their eldest sons to England to the great schools there. But it is doubtful if these young men learned much about books.

They spent a winter or two in the gay society of London, and were taught the manners of gentlemen—and that was about all.

George Washington's father, when a young man, had spent some time at Appleby School in England, and George's half-brothers, Lawrence and Augustine, who were several years older than he, had been sent to the same school.

But book-learning was not thought to be of much use. To know how to manage the business of a plantation, to be polite to one's equals, to be a leader in the affairs of the colony—this was thought to be the best education.

And so, for most of the young men, it was enough if they could read and write a little and keep a few simple accounts. As for the girls, the parson might give them a few lessons now and then; and if they learned good manners and could write letters to their friends, what more could they need?

George Washington's first teacher was a poor sexton, whose name was Mr. Hobby. There is a story that he had been too poor to pay his passage from England, and that he had, therefore, been sold to Mr. Washington as a slave for a short time; but how true this is I cannot say.

From Mr. Hobby, George learned to spell easy words, and perhaps to write a little; but though he afterward became a very careful and good penman, he was a poor speller as long as he lived.

*Four Great Americans*, James Baldwin, Ph.D., p. 14.

### Peter and "Hobby"

While I was a child, my father, as I have said, made many voyages to England and fetched back with him convicts, and perhaps also indentured servants. Often in those days some of the unfortunate people thus sent to the colonies were under sentence for political offences, but many, of course, for crimes. One of these, a convict I was told, was my first schoolmaster. We called him Hobby, which was, I believe, a nickname; but he was named Grove, and was sexton of the Falmouth church, two miles away. Of what our sexton schoolmaster had been convicted I never heard, but of this I am assured, that my father would not have used as a schoolmaster a common thief. I used to ride the two miles to the "field-school," as they called it, in front of a slave named Peter, and later was allowed a pony, to my mother's alarm when he would tumble me off, as happened now and then. Hobby was a short man, with one eye, and too good-humored or too timid to be a good teacher, even of the a-b-c's and the little else we learned.

My father was kind to this man, and perhaps knew his history. He would even have allowed him the use of the rod, with the aid of which I might have profited more largely, for I am of his opinion that children should be strictly brought up. Hobby, being of a humorous turn, seems to me, as I remember him, to have resembled the grave-digger in "Hamlet." He sometimes amused and at other times terrified us by tales of London or of his recent life as a sexton. He believed many of the negro superstitions—as that if a snake's head was cut off the tail

would live until it thundered—and was much afraid of having what he called black magic put upon him by the negroes.

I did not learn much from Hobby and preferred to be out of doors. My father considered, I believe, that, as I was a younger son and must in some way support myself, I should be well trained in both mind and body, and had he lived the chance of the former might have been bettered.

*The Youth of Washington, Told in the Form of an Autobiography, S. Weir Mitchell, M.D.,*  
p. 29.

### **His Earliest Playfellows**

The first playmate Washington had, outside of his own immediate family, was another Lawrence Washington, a very distant cousin, who lived at Choptank on the Potomac, and who, with his brother, Robert Washington, early won Washington's regard, and kept it through life.

It was at Choptank, with Lal and Bob, Washington first met with traffic between the old world and the new. There was no money used except tobacco notes, which passed among merchants in London and Amsterdam as cash. Foreign ships brought across the ocean goods that the Virginians needed, and the captains sold the goods for these tobacco notes. Much of Washington's time was spent with these boys.

While at school under Mr. Hobby, he used to divide his playmates into parties and armies. One of them was called the French and the other American. A big boy named William Bustle commanded the former; George commanded the latter, and every day with cornstalks for muskets and calabashes [gourds] for drums, the two armies would turn out and march and fight.

From the (N. Y.) *Evangelist*, Anonymous.

### **George Tells His Father What He Hopes to Be**

"Tell me something else," said George's father. "If you are only anxious to be a soldier, how is it that you

complain of not being taught how to steer a ship or build a bridge. Surely these things have little to do with leading men to battle?"

"I don't know," answered the boy; "perhaps I am mistaken, but I thought if I wanted to take Fredericksburg with my army here in Pine Grove, we should need a bridge. Ought not a soldier to know almost everything? There'd be forts to build and navies to give orders to, and—all sorts of things I know nothing about. Won't you have me taught? I'll work so diligently, and learn the other things too, if you wish, sir?"

"Do you feel too old to sit on my knees?" said Augustine, suddenly leaning forward and stretching out his arms.

George, who had been standing before the fire during all this debate, came to his father with a bound, and Augustine drew him very close to him.

"My dear, gallant little man," he said, "I think you have truly hit upon the cleanest, finest trade in the world. It takes more virtue to be a good officer than to preach fine sermons, and there never was a case taken to the lawyers that the soldier could not have settled more quickly and honorably. But, boy, the soldier is made at home, or he'll never be such on the battlefield. I have asked you many questions, and now I must ask you one or two more. Will you think well before you answer me?"

"Yes, sir," said George, puckering up his brow, and squaring his shoulders, but never taking his eyes from his father's face.

"Well," went on Mr. Washington, "you have thought of fighting, of glory. There is another side to the question. Suppose after marches and wounds, such stiff, sore wounds, George—after long weeks of starvation and misery, and cold and wet—that you tried your best and were beaten—not a little beating, but a terrible disheartening, humiliating defeat. Such as your brother Lawrence had to suffer with poor Admiral Vernon at San Lazaro. What would you do?"

George thought a minute over the ugly picture. Then he made a grimace and said, "I think, sir, I would take one good meal from the enemy, he'd owe me that, for the fun he'd had in beating me, and then I'd thank him—and try again. I'd have a better chance, because he'd be less afraid of me after beating me once."

"Right," said his father, "and if you are never beaten, remember the prescription. But a soldier has other difficulties. How about carrying out disastrous bad orders from a superior? Would you obey them?"

"Not if I could help it," laughed the boy.

"And if you couldn't help it?"

"I'd obey, I suppose. But I'd find a cleverer man to serve the next time," replied George.

"And suppose the superior were the king?" pursued Augustine. "Loyalty is a soldier's first duty, and there have been monstrous bad kings, you know."

"But they may be good generals!" persisted the lad.

"I mean bad in every way, a bad man, a bad ruler, a bad general," his father replied. "What would you do then?"

"Make another," said George, quietly.

Augustine gazed at his son in amazement. "Upon my word, I believe you would," he explained. "Shake hands, George!"

*In the Shadow of the Lord, Mrs. Hugh Fraser, p. 238.*

### Two Boyish Letters

Within a few years past, there have been published two little letters, one pretending to be from Richard Henry Lee, at the age of eight, and the other the reply to it, by George Washington, at the age of nine. They will amuse our readers and we therefore print them. But it is not as a bit of history, that they appear here. They are probably an illustration of clever literary work, attempting, at the end of a century, to reproduce the phrases of the past.

They must be read with extreme caution. In the first place, it is very improbable that in such a family as that of the Lees, these letters should have been hidden for a hundred years. Indeed no one explains to us whether Master Richard Henry Lee, at that early age, had a letter book in which he kept rough copies of the notes which he was going to send to a friend. In the second place, the letters have the difficulty which all such imagined correspondence has, that they show us just what we already know, and that they do not add to our information anything of even the very smallest detail. There is a very clever effort made to sustain the reputation which Washington afterwards acquired for spelling well, and poor Master Lee is relegated back to the ranks of those who cannot spell. The letters, however, must be classed with a very large number of myths, some of them interesting and some of them very stupid, which the enthusiasm of a hundred years has encouraged in relation to Washington and the different details of his career. These make the misery of his biographer.

The boy letters are these:

*(From Richard H. Lee to George Washington.)*

"Pa brought me two pretty books full of pictures he got them in Alexandria they have pictures of dogs and cats and tigers and elephants and ever so many pretty things cousin bids me send you one of them it has a picture of an elephant and a little indian boy on his back like uncle jo's sam pa says if I learn my tasks good he will let uncle jo bring me to see you will you ask your ma to let you come to see me

"RICHARD HENRY LEE."

*(To which this is the answer:)*

"Dear Dickey, I thank you very much for the pretty picture book you gave me. Sam asked me to show him

the pictures and I showed him all the pictures in it; and I read to him how the tame Elephant took care of the master's little boy, and put him on his back and would not let anybody touch his master's little son. I can read three or four pages sometimes without missing a word. Ma says I may go to see you and stay all day with you next week if it be not rainy. She says I may ride my pony Hero if Uncle Ben will go with me and lead Hero. I have a little piece of poetry about the picture book you gave me, But I mustn't tell you who wrote the poetry.

"G. W.'s compliments to R. H. L.,  
And likes his book full well,  
Henceforth will count him his friend,  
And hopes many happy days he may spend.  
"Your good friend,  
"GEORGE WASHINGTON."

*The Life of George Washington Studied Anew, Edward Everett Hale, p. 7.*

### Brother Lawrence

In those days the means of instruction in Virginia were limited and it was the custom among the wealthy planters to send their sons to England to complete their education. This was done by Augustine Washington with his eldest son Lawrence, then about fifteen years of age, and whom he no doubt considered the future head of the family. . . .

When George was about seven or eight years old his brother Lawrence returned from England, a well-educated and accomplished youth. There was a difference of fourteen years in their ages, which may have been one cause of the strong attachment which took place between them. Lawrence looked down with a protecting eye upon the boy whose dawning intelligence and perfect rectitude won his regard; while George looked up to his manly and cultivated brother as a model in mind and manners. We call particular attention to this brotherly interchange of affection, from the influence it had on all the future career of the subject of this memoir.



Lawrence Washington had something of the old military spirit of the family, and circumstances soon called it into action. Spanish depredations on British commerce had recently provoked reprisals. Admiral Vernon, commander-in-chief in the West Indies, had accordingly captured Porto Bello, on the Isthmus of Darien. The Spaniards were preparing to revenge the blow; the French were fitting out ships to aid them. Troops were embarked in England for another campaign in the West Indies; a regiment of four batalions was to be raised in the colonies and sent to join them in Jamaica. There was a sudden outbreak of military ardor in the province; the sound of fife and drum was heard in the villages, with the parade of the recruiting parties. Lawrence Washington, now twenty-two years of age, caught the infection. He obtained a captain's commission in the newly raised regiment, and embarked with it for the West Indies in 1740. He served in the joint expeditions of Admiral Vernon and General Wentworth, in the land forces commanded by the latter, and acquired the friendship and confidence of both those officers. He was present at the siege of Carthagena, when it was bombarded by the fleet, and when the troops attempted to escalate the citadel. It was an ineffectual attack; the ships could not get near enough to throw their shells into the town, and the scaling-ladders proved too short. That part of the attack, however, with which Lawrence was concerned, distinguished itself by its bravery. The troops sustained unflinching a destructive fire for several hours, and at length retired with honor, their small force having sustained a loss of about six hundred in killed and wounded.

Lawrence Washington returned home in the autumn of 1742, the campaigns in the West Indies being ended, and Admiral Vernon and General Wentworth being recalled to England. It was the intention of Lawrence to rejoin

his regiment in that country, and seek promotion in the army, but circumstances completely altered his plans.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. I, pp. 45 to 48.

### The Fairfax Family

The Hon. William Fairfax . . . resided at a beautiful seat called Belvoir, a few miles below Mount Vernon, and on the same woody ridge bordering the Potomac.

William Fairfax was a man of liberal education and intrinsic worth; he had seen much of the world, and his mind had been enriched and ripened by varied and adventurous experience. Of an ancient English family in Yorkshire, he had entered the army at the age of twenty-one; had served with honor both in the East and West Indies, and officiated as Governor of New Providence after having aided in rescuing it from pirates. For some years past he had resided in Virginia, to manage the immense landed estates of his cousin, Lord Fairfax, and lived at Belvoir in the style of an English country gentleman, surrounded by an intelligent and cultivated family of sons and daughters.

An intimacy with a family like this, in which the frankness and simplicity of rural and colonial life were united with European refinement, could not but have a beneficial effect in moulding the character and manners of a somewhat home-bred schoolboy. It was probably his intercourse with them, and his ambition to acquit himself well in their society, that set him upon compiling a code of morals and manners which still exists in a manuscript in his own handwriting, entitled, "Rules for Behaviour in Company and Conversation." It is extremely minute and circumstantial. Some of the rules for personal deportment extend to such trivial matters, and are so quaint and formal as almost to provoke a smile; but, in the main, a better manual of conduct could not be put into the hands of a youth. The whole code evinces that rigid propriety and self-control to which he subjected himself and by which he brought all

the impulses of a somewhat ardent temper under conscientious government.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. I, p. 53.

### I Lost My Best Friend

In 1742 Lawrence came from Carthagera, and meant to continue in the service, but, after our sudden way, he fell in love with Anne, the daughter of William Fairfax of Belvoir, our neighbor, the cousin and agent of my lord of that name, and this, luckily for my own character, ended his desire for a military life. I too well recall the event which delayed his marriage. I was at this time, April 17, 1743, being eleven years old, on a visit to my cousins at Choptank, some thirty miles away. We were very merry at supper, when Peter, who was supposed to look after me, arrived with the news of my father's sudden illness. It was the first of my too many experiences of the ravage time brings to all men. I heard the news with a kind of awe, but without realizing how serious in many ways was this summons. I rode home behind Peter and found my mother in a state of distraction. She led me to the bedside of my father, crying out, "He is dying." The children were around him, and he was groaning in great pain; but he kissed us in turn, and said to me, "Be good to your mother." I may say that throughout her life I have kept the promise I made him as I knelt, crying, at his bedside. He died that night, and I lost my best friend.

*The Youth of Washington, Told in the Form of an Autobiography*, S. Weir Mitchell, M.D., p. 37.

#### Principal Events of Washington's First Twenty Years

Franklin published "Poor Richard's Almanac" ..	1732
George Washington born .....	1732
Oglethorpe settled in Georgia .....	1733
King George's War .....	1744
Capture of Louisburg .....	1745
Franklin discovered that lightning and electricity are the same .....	1752

## CHAPTER III

### GEORGE AND HIS MOTHER

#### The Widow and Her Brood

George, now eleven years of age, and the other children of the second marriage, had been left under the guardianship of their mother, to whom was intrusted the proceeds of all their property until they should severally come of age. She proved herself worthy of the trust. Endowed with plain, direct good sense, thorough conscientiousness, and prompt decision, she governed her family strictly, but kindly, exacting deference while she inspired affection. George, being her eldest son, was thought to be her favorite, yet she never gave him undue preference, and the implicit deference exacted from him in childhood continued to be habitually observed by him to the day of her death. He inherited from her a high temper and a spirit of command, but her early precepts and example taught him to restrain and govern that temper, and to square his conduct on the exact principles of equity and justice.

Tradition gives an interesting picture of the widow, with her little flock gathered round her, as was her daily wont, reading to them lessons of religion and morality out of some standard work. Her favorite volume was Sir Matthew Hale's *Contemplations*, moral and divine. The admirable maxims therein contained, for outward action as well as self-government, sank deep into the mind of George, and, doubtless, had a great influence in forming his character. They certainly were exemplified in his conduct throughout life. This mother's manual, bearing his mother's name, Mary Washington, written with her own hand, was ever preserved by him with filial care, and may

still be seen in the archives of Mount Vernon. A precious document. Let those who wish to know the moral foundation of his character consult its pages.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. I, p. 49.

### Work on "Ferry Farm"

The plantation was on the Rappahannock, opposite the town. It was called "Pine Grove," from a body of great trees near the house. The negroes sometimes called it "Ferry Farm."

After the death of her husband, Mary Washington gave her life to the care of her family, with the devotion of a great heart and mind. Her stepson, Lawrence Washington, was her adviser. The plantation raised wool, flax, tobacco, and corn; carding and spinning wool were carried on in the house. Spinning-wheels buzzed in the busy rooms, which looked out on great fields and gardens. The Rappahannock flowed in full view, and the family at Pine Grove were happy and prosperous.

Here George Washington passed his early years, at times visiting his half-brother, Lawrence, who married, in the year after his father's death, Annie Fairfax, the daughter of Hon. William Fairfax, of Belvoir, an elegant estate adjoining Mount Vernon, which later became George Washington's own home.

The estates of Belvoir, Mount Vernon, and the landed aristocracy of Virginia were very large, and Greenway Court surpassed them all in size, as it was intended that it should do some day in the grandeur of its manor-house. The home of Mary Washington was humble, but most of the houses of the Virginian planters were large, elegant, and richly furnished.

*The Boys of Greenway Court*, Hezekiah Butterworth, p. 66.

### His First Hunt

I was at this time more about the stables than was allowed under my father's rule, and did, in fact, much as I

liked out of school hours. It so happened that once, on a Saturday, there being no school, I was very early at the stables, and, as there was no one to hinder, made the groom saddle a hunter we had. On this I made my appearance at a meet for fox-hunting, four miles from home, to the great amusement of the gentry. They asked me if I could stay on, and if the horse knew he had anyone on his back. However, the big sorrel carried me well, and knew his business better than I did. I saw two foxes killed, and this was my first hunt; but as I rode home my horse went lame, and, to save him I dismounted and led him. Towards noon when we were come to the farm stable, I found the overseer, with a whip in his hand, swearing at Sampson, and making as if to beat him. I ran behind them and snatched away the whip. The overseer turned and, seeing me, said he meant to punish Sampson for letting me take a horse which was sold to go to Williamsburg. When he knew the horse was lame he was still more angry; but I declared I was to blame, and no one else, and said he should first whip me. He said no more, except that my mother would say what was to be done. I think he made no report of me, and certainly my mother said nothing. When the overseer had walked away, the old servant thanked me, and said no one had ever struck him, and that it would be his death. This seemed strange to me, a boy, for the slaves were whipped like children, and thought as little of it. Sampson said to me that I was like my father, and that when I was angry I became red and then pale, and that I must never get angry with a horse.

*The Youth of Washington, Told in the Form of an Autobiography, S. Weir Mitchell, M.D., p. 45.*

### Three Important Years

My father died in April, 1743, and Lawrence was married to Miss Fairfax in June of that year. It was fortunate for me that my brother's wife, Anna Fairfax, soon shared the constant affection felt for me by her husband Lawrence.



*Facsimiles.*  
March 12<sup>th</sup> 1744/5  
Geo Washington

---

Beginning this Eleventh Day of November 1749

Washington

---

Gentl. Y<sup>r</sup> Most Obed. Hble Serv.  
Fort Loudoun }  
10<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1757 } - G<sup>o</sup> Washington

---

Y<sup>r</sup> Most affect Brother,  
G<sup>o</sup> Washington

New York 29<sup>th</sup> of April 1776

---

Mount Vernon G<sup>o</sup> Washington  
December 10<sup>th</sup>  
1799

---

WASHINGTON'S AUTOGRAPHS AT DIFFERENT PERIODS

(At 13, 17, 25, 44 and 67 years of age. The last signature was made four days before his death.)



Austin, as we usually called Augustine, also embarked into the matrimonial state as the husband of Anne Aylett of Westmoreland, who brought him a large property.

The next three years of my young life were important. I learned very soon from my mother that, when of age, I would have a moderate estate and insufficient. It is a happy thing that children have no power to realize what money means to their elders, else I might have been set against Lawrence and thought my father unjust. . . . After my father's death, and in the absence of my elder brothers, the house and farm soon showed the want of a man's care, and we boys enjoyed at this time almost unlimited freedom. My older brothers saw it, and felt that I, at least, might suffer, being of an age and nature to need discipline and to be guided. In fact, I delighted to skip away from my man, Peter, and find indulgence in roasting ears of Indian corn in the forbidden cabins of the field-slaves, or in coon-hunts at night, when all the house was asleep.

*The Youth of Washington, Told in the Form of an Autobiography, S. Weir Mitchell, M.D., p. 41.*

### In Mr. Williams's School

While matters concerning the estate were being discussed, Lawrence soon discovered so much of my too great freedom that he and my half-brother Augustine insisted that I should go to live for a time with the latter, near to whose abode was a good school. . . .

It was a long ride across the neck and down to Pope's Creek on the Potomac, and I was a tired lad when we rode at evening up to the door of the house of Wakefield, where I was born eleven years before.

Here began a new life for me. Anne Aylett, Mrs. Augustine Washington, was a kind woman, very orderly in her ways, and handsome. After two days Peter was sent home, and I was allowed to ride alone to a Mr. Williams's school at Oak Grove, four miles away.

I took very easily to arithmetic, and later, to mathematic studies. I remember with what pleasure and pride I accompanied Mr. Williams when he went to survey some meadows on Bridges' Creek. To discover that what could be learned at school might be turned to use in setting out the bounds of land, gave me the utmost satisfaction. I have always had this predilection for such knowledge as can be put to practical uses, and was never weary of tramping after my teacher, which much surprised my sister-in-law. I took less readily to geography and history. Some effort was made (but this was later) to instruct me in the rudiments of Latin, but it was not kept up, and a phrase or two I found wrote later in a copy-book is all that remains to me of that tongue.

I much regret that I never learned to spell very well or to write English with elegance. As the years went by, I improved as to both defects, through incessant care on my part and copying my letters over and over. Great skill in the use of language I have never possessed, but I have always been able to make my meaning so plain in what I wrote that no one could fail to understand what I desired to make known.

*The Youth of Washington, Told in the Form of an Autobiography, S. Weir Mitchell, M.D. p. 48.*

### George and the Younger Children

The two years that had passed away had brought more developments than changes in the Washington home. George and Betty presented strong contrasts of character, but were inseparable allies, ruling unquestioningly over their three little brothers. Charles, the youngest of the three, was at this time about five years old, and had just been promoted to the honour of going to school with his seniors. It was but a parish school, some two miles distant from Pine Grove, and the children greatly enjoyed their rides thither in the morning, and home again at night. Betty and Samuel generally returned earlier than George, who felt

responsible not only for the safety of the two smaller boys, but for their horsemanship. He was much distressed to find that, in spite of his admonitions, the fat little legs would still stick out at a violent angle from the equally fat ponies' sides, and if they met other riders in the country roads, would put himself and his steed between them and the little brothers, who, he felt, as yet did no credit to their teacher. George, already a fearless and graceful rider, was always the head of the little band; he was a brave and handsome boy, resembling both father and mother, as the first child of a happy love so often does. Full of spirits, ready for any adventure, the gallant little lad had a deep fund of sense and principle, and never shirked nor neglected his responsibilities towards his juniors. Mary knew that in all circumstances where those two great qualities—conscience and courage—were required, George would not fail. Did his quick spirits lead him into some boyish scrape, the other children were never involved in it; and his first step, on realizing what he had done, was always to seek out his mother and say, "I fear you will be displeased, ma'am; but I hope you will forgive me. I have—" lamed a pony, perhaps, or left the gate of the farm-yard open, or torn a Sunday coat in climbing for apples, or what not. Mary was never left in doubt as to the author of a bit of mischief if the author were George; and both she and Augustine made a point of encouraging this openness in all the children by awarding very light punishment when the fault was bravely confessed. Both of them would have preferred to lose everything they possessed rather than frighten a child into cowardly deceit.

*In the Shadow of the Lord*, Mrs. Hugh Fraser, p. 213.

### Early Education and Discipline

His education, however, was plain and practical. He never attempted the learned languages, nor manifested any inclination for rhetoric or belles-lettres. His object, or the

object of his friends, seems to have been confined to fitting him for ordinary business. His manuscript school books still exist, and are models of neatness and accuracy. One of them, it is true, a ciphering-book, preserved in the library at Mount Vernon, has some school-boy attempts at calligraphy: nondescript birds, executed with a flourish of the pen, or profiles of faces, probably intended for those of his schoolmates; the rest are all grave and business-like. Before he was thirteen years of age he had copied into a volume forms for all kinds of mercantile and legal papers; bills of exchange, notes of hand, deeds, bonds and the like. This early self-tuition gave him throughout life a lawyer's skill in drafting documents, and a merchant's exactness in keeping accounts; so that all the concerns of his various estates, his dealings with his domestic stewards and foreign agents, his accounts with government, and all his financial transactions are to this day to be seen posted up in books, in his own handwriting, monuments of his method and unwearied accuracy.

He was a self-disciplinarian in physical as well as mental matters, and practised himself in all kinds of athletic exercises, such as running, leaping, wrestling, pitching quoits, and tossing bars. His frame even in infancy had been large and powerful, and he now excelled most of his playmates in contests of agility and strength. As a proof of his muscular power, a place is still pointed out at Fredericksburg, near the lower ferry, where, when a boy, he flung a stone across the Rappahannock. In horsemanship, too, he already excelled, and was ready to back and able to manage the most fiery steed. Traditional anecdotes remain of his achievements in this respect.

Above all, his inherent probity and the principles of justice on which he regulated all his conduct, even at this early period of life, were soon appreciated by his schoolmates; he was referred to as an umpire in their disputes, and his decisions were never reversed. As he had formerly

been military chieftain, he was now legislator of the school; thus displaying in boyhood a type of the future man.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. I, p. 51.

### Why George Was Not Sent to School in England

Soon after going to live for a season at Wakefield with Augustine, I began to take myself more seriously than is common in boys of my age. I believe I have all my life been regarded as grave and reserved, although, in fact, a part of this was due to a certain shyness, which I never entirely overcame, and of which I have already written. My new schoolmaster, Mr. Williams, gave me a book which I still have, and which here, and later at Mount Vernon, was of use to me. It was called the "Youth's Companion." It contained receipts, directions for conduct and manners, how to write letters, and, what most pleased me, methods of surveying land by Gunter's rule, and all manner of problems in arithmetic and mathematics, as well as methods of writing deeds and conveyances. Young as I was, it suited well the practical side of my nature; for how to do things, and the doing of them so as to reach practical results, have never ceased to please me.

My mother's natural desire for my presence wore out the patience of Augustine, and I was at last, after some months (but I do not remember exactly how long), sent back to her and to a school kept by the Rev. James Marye, a gentleman of Huguenot descent, at Fredericksburg, and from whom I might have learned French. My father had been desirous, I know not why, that I should learn this language, but this I never did, to my regret.

I was at this time about fourteen, and was, as I said, a rather grave lad. I was industrious as to what I liked, but fond of horses and the chase, and was big of my years, masterful, and of more than common bodily strength.

I was not more unfortunate than most other young Virginians in regard to education. Governor Spottiswood,

as I have heard, found no members of the majority in the House who could spell correctly or write so as to clearly state their grievances. There were persons, like the late Colonel Byrd, who were exceptions, but these were usually such as had been abroad. Patrick Henry, long after this time, observed to my sister that, even if we Virginians had little education, Mother Wit was better than Mother Country, for the gentlemen who came back brought home more vices than virtues. In fact, this may have been my father's opinion; for, although he sent Lawrence and Augustine to the Appleby School in England, he would not allow of any long residence in London, where, he said, "men's manners are finished, but so, too, are their virtues."

*The Youth of Washington, Told in the Form of an Autobiography, S. Weir Mitchell, M.D., p. 55.*

### A Little Latin

After a time he returned to his mother's and attended the school kept by the Rev. James Marye, in Fredericksburg. It has been universally asserted by his biographers that he studied no foreign language, but direct proof to the contrary exists in a copy of Patrick's Latin translation of Homer, printed in 1742, the fly-leaf of a copy of which bears, in a school-boy hand, the inscription:

"Hunc mihi quaeso (bone Vir) Libellum  
Redde, si forsan tenues repertum  
Ut Scias qui sum sine fraude Scriptum.  
Est mihi nomen,

GEORGIO WASHINGTON,  
GEORGE WASHINGTON,  
Fredericksburg,  
Virginia."

It is thus evident that the reverend teacher gave Washington at least the first elements of Latin, but it is equally clear that the boy, like most others, forgot it with the greatest facility as soon as he ceased studying.

The end of Washington's school-days left him, if a good "cipherer," a bad speller, and a still worse grammarian, but, fortunately, the termination of instruction did not by any means end his education. From that time there is to be noted a steady improvement in both these failings.

*The True George Washington*, Paul Leicester Ford, p. 63.

### **"Mute as Mice" before Mary Washington**

This lady possessed not the ambition which is common to lesser minds; and the peculiar plainness, yet dignity of her habits and manners, became in nowise altered, when the sun of glory rose upon her house, in the character of her child. The late Lawrence Washington, Esq., of Choptank, one of the associates of the juvenile years of the chief, and remembered by him in his will, thus describes the home of the mother:

"I was often there with George, his playmate, school-mate, and young man's companion. Of the mother I was ten times more afraid than I ever was of my own parents. She awed me in the midst of her kindness, for she was, indeed, truly kind. I have often been present with her sons, proper tall fellows too, and we were all as mute as mice; and even now, when time has whitened my locks, and I am the grandparent of a second generation, I could not behold that remarkable woman without feelings it is impossible to describe. Whoever has seen that awe-inspiring air and manner, so characteristic in the Father of his Country, will remember the matron as she appeared when the presiding genius of her well-ordered household, commanding and being obeyed."

Of the many anecdotes touching the early life of the chief, we shall present our readers with one of no ordinary interest and character.

The blooded horse was the Virginia favorite of those days as well as these. Washington's mother, fond of the animal to which her deceased husband had been particularly

attached, had preserved the race in its greatest purity, and at the time of our story possessed several young horses of superior promise.

One there was, a sorrel, destined to be as famous (and for much better reason) as the horse which the brutal emperor raised to the dignity of consul. This sorrel was of a fierce and ungovernable nature, and resisted all attempts to subject him to the rein. He had reached his fullest size and vigor, unconscious of a rider; he ranged free in the air, which he snuffed in triumph, tossing his mane to the winds, and spurning the earth in pride of his freedom. It was a matter of common remark, that a man would never be found hardy enough to back and ride this vicious horse. Several had essayed, but deterred by the fury of the animal, they had desisted from their attempts, and the steed remained unbroken.

The young Washington proposed to his companions, that if they would assist him in confining the steed, so that a bridle could be placed in his mouth, he would engage to tame this terror of the parish. Accordingly, early the ensuing morning, the associates decoyed the horse into an inclosure, where they secured him and forced a bit into his mouth. Bold, vigorous, and young, the daring youth sprang to his unenvied seat, and bidding his comrades remove their tackle, the indignant courser rushed to the plain.

As if disdaining his burden, he at first attempted to fly, but soon felt the power of an arm which could have tamed his Arab grandsires in their wildest course on their native deserts. The struggle now became terrific to the beholders, who almost wished they had not joined in an enterprise so likely to be fatal to their daring associate. But the youthful hero, that "spirit-protected man," clung to the furious steed, till centaur-like he appeared to make part of the animal itself. Long was the conflict and the fears of his associates became more relieved as, with matchless



skill, the rider preserved his seat, and with unyielding force controlled the courser's rage, when the gallant horse, summoning all his powers to one mighty effort, reared, and plunged with tremendous violence, burst his noble heart, and died in an instant.

The rider, "alive, unharmed, and without a wound," was joined by the youthful group, and all gazed upon the generous steed, which, now prostrate, "trailed in dust the honors of his mane," while from distended nostrils gushed in torrents the life-blood that a moment before had swollen in his veins.

The first surprise was scarcely over, with a what's to be done? Who shall tell this tale? when the party were summoned to the morning's meal. A conversation, the most *mal à propos* to the youthful culprits, became introduced by the matron's asking, "Pray, young gentlemen, have you seen my blooded colts in your rambles? I hope they are well taken care of; my favorite, I am told, is as large as his sire." Considerable embarrassment being observable, the lady repeated her question, when George Washington replied, "Your favorite, the sorrel, is dead, madam." "Dead," exclaimed the lady; "why, how has that happened?" Nothing dismayed, the youth continued, "That sorrel horse has long been considered ungovernable, and beyond the power of man to back or ride him; this morning, aided by my friends, we forced a bit into his mouth; I backed him, I rode him, and in a desperate struggle for the mastery, he fell under me and died upon the spot." The hectic of a moment was observed to flush the matron's cheek, but like a summer cloud, it soon passed away, and all was serene and tranquil when she remarked: "It is well; but while I regret the loss of my favorite, *I rejoice in my son, who always speaks the truth.*"

*Recollections of Washington, by His Adopted Son, George Washington Parke Custis,*  
P. 131.

### The Rev. James Marye and the "Rules of Civility"

While gathering materials for a personal and domestic biography of Washington, I discovered that in 1745 he was attending school in Fredericksburg, Virginia. The first church (St. George's) of the infant town was just then finished, and the clergyman was the Rev. James Marye, a native of France. . . . It is tolerably certain that Mr. Marye founded the school soon after his settlement there as rector, which was in 1735, eight years after the foundation of Fredericksburg. . . .

The various intrinsic interest of these Rules of Civility is much enhanced by the curious story of their migration from an old Jesuit College in France to the copy-book of George Washington. . . .

In a letter to the *New York Nation* (5th June, 1890) I said: "Though my theory, that the Rev. James Marye taught Washington these 'Rules,' has done good service in leading to the discovery of their origin, it cannot be verified.

. . . The discovery . . . that a Part Second of Youth's Behavior was published in 1664, and dedicated to two ladies of the Washington family in England, lends force to the suggestion that Washington might have worked out his Rules from the Hawkins [English] version." . . .

On the whole, though it is very uncertain, the balance of probabilities seems to favor the theory that the Rules of Civility, found in a copy-book among school exercises, exceedingly abbreviated, and marked by clerical errors unusual with Washington, were derived from the oral teachings of his preceptor. . . .

He returned to live with his mother, near Fredericksburg, in 1745. That he then went to school in Fredericksburg appears, by a manuscript left by Colonel Byrd Wills, grandson of Colonel Harry Wills, founder of the town, in which he states that his father, Lewis Wills, was Washing-

ton's schoolmate. The teacher's name is not given, but there can be little doubt that it was James Marye.

*George Washington's Rules of Civility*, Moncure D. Conway, pp. 11 to 34.

### **"Rules of Civility and Behaviour"**

*(As written in George Washington's Copy-book.)*

Every Action done in Company ought to be with Some Sign of Respect, to those that are Present.

Shew Nothing to your Friend that may affright him.

In the Presence of Others sing not to yourself with a humming Noise, nor Drum, with your Fingers or Feet.

If you Cough, Sneeze, Sigh, or Yawn, do it not Loud, but Privately; and Speak not in your Yawning, but put your handkerchief or Hand before your face and turn aside.

Sleep not when others Speak, Sit not when others stand, Speak not when you should hold your Peace, walk not when others Stop

At Play and at Fire its Good manners to give Place to the last Commer, and not affect to Speak Louder than ordinary.

When you Sit down, Keep your Feet firm and Even, without putting one on the other or Crossing them

Shift not yourself in the Sight of others nor Gnaw your nails.

Turn not your Back to others especially in Speaking, Jog not the Table or Desk on which Another writes lean not upon any one.

Keep your Nails clean and Short, also your Hands and Teeth Clean, yet without Shewing any great Concern for them

Be no Flatterer, neither Play with any that delights not to be Play'd Withal.

Read no Letters, Books, or Papers in Company but when there is a Necessity for the doing of it you must ask leave: come not near the Books or Writings of Another so

as to read them unless desired or give your opinion of them unask'd also look not nigh when another is writing a Letter.

Let your Countenance be pleasant but in Serious Matters Somewhat grave

The Gestures of the Body must be Suited to the discourse you are upon

Reproach none for the Infirmities of Nature, nor Delight to Put them that have in mind thereof.

Shew not yourself glad at the Misfortune of another tho he be your enemy

Superfluous Complements and all Affectation of Ceremony are to be avoided, yet where due they are not to be Neglected

If any one come to Speak to you while you are Sitting Stand up tho he be your Inferiour, and when you Present Seats let it be to every one according to his Degree.

Let your Discourse with Men of Business be Short and Comprehensive.

In visiting the Sick, do not Presently play the Physicion if you be not Knowing therein

In writing or Speaking, give to every Person his due Title According to his Degree & the Custom of the Place.

Strive not with your Superiers in argument, but always Submit your Judgment to others with Modesty

Do not express Joy before one sick or in pain for that contrary Passion will aggravate his Misery

When a man does all he can though it Succeeds not blame not him that did it.

Mock not nor Jest of anything of Importance break no Jest that are Sharp Biting, and if you Deliver anything witty and Pleasent abstain from Laughing thereat yourself.

Wherein you reprove Another be unblameable yourself; for example is more prevalent than Precepts

Use no Reproachfull Language against any one neither Curse nor Revile

Be not hasty to believe flying Reports to the Disparagement of any

In your Apparel be Modest and endeavour to accommodate Nature, rather than to procure Admiration keep to the Fashion of your equals Such as are Civil and orderly with respect to Times and Places

Eat not in the Streets, nor in ye House, out of Season.

Associate yourself with Men of good Quality if you Esteem your own Reputation; for 'tis better to be alone than in bad Company.

Be not immodest in urging your Friends to Discover a Secret.

Speak not of doleful Things in a Time of Mirth or at the Table; Speak not of Melancholy Things as Death and Wounds, and if others Mention them Change if you can the Discourse tell not your Dreams, but to your intimate Friend

Break not a Jest where none take pleasure in mirth Laugh not aloud, nor at all without Occasion, deride no man's Misfortune, tho' there seem to be Some cause

Speak not injurious Words neither in Jest nor Earnest Scoff at none although they give Occasion

Detract not from others neither be excessive in Commending.

Gaze not at the marks or blemishes of Others and ask not how they came. What you may Speak in Secret to your Friend deliver not before others

Treat with men at fit Times about Business & Whisper not in the Company of Others

Be not apt to relate News if you know not the truth thereof. In Discoursing of things you Have heard Name not your Author always A Secret Discover not

Be not Tedious in Discourse or in reading unless you find the Company pleased therewith

Be not Curious to Know the Affairs of Others neither approach to those that Speak in Private

Undertake not what you cannot Perform but be Carefull to keep your Promise

Speak not Evil of the absent for it is unjust

Its unbecoming to Stoop much to one's Meat Keep your Fingers clean & when foul wipe them on a Corner of your Table Napkin.

When you Speak of God or his Attributes, let it be Seriously & with Reverence. Honour & obey your Natural Parents Altho they be Poor

Let your Recreations be Manfull not Sinfull.

Labour to keep alive in your Breast that Little Spark of Celestial fire called Conscience.

Selected from *George Washington's Rules of Civility*, Moncure D. Conway, pp. 55 to 179.

### **Long Suspense after Writing to "Uncle Joseph" about George's Going to Sea**

Then Mary, half frightened at having almost consented to such a step without consulting an older person, wrote to her brother Joseph, asking his views on the matter. Joseph had been Augustine's friend, and ever the kindest of brothers to herself, but it is doubtful whether these were her only reasons for appealing to him. She dreaded the moment of decision, whichever way it should go, and she could put it off for at least six months—the time which must elapse before she could receive Joseph's reply.

Those six months were terribly trying to both mother and son. George had never been so kind, so dutiful, so considerate as now, although he sometimes thought he must die of the suspense he was bearing. To Mary he was dearer every day, her right hand and supporter, her comfort and crown, as his father had foretold. When her inmost heart told her she could never let him go, it bled at the pain she must inflict by withholding her consent; when her mood was more self-renouncing, and she felt that it might be her duty to give him up, she quailed at the loss which she must suffer—a loss which seemed insupportable in her widowed life. No son or daughter would ever take the

place of her eldest-born. Lawrence, meanwhile, was not idle, and did all that he could to forward the plan. When Mary told him that she was waiting to hear from George's uncle he laughed outright at the thought that Mr. Ball, in distant London, could judge better for the boy than those who were on the spot and had known him all his life. He was anxious to get the matter arranged before the English letter should arrive, having no great opinion of the judgment of a man who had left an assured position in Virginia to become one of a crowd of obscure persons in London. As time went on his nervousness increased as to what dire effects the expected letter might have greatly increased, and with eagerness only matched by that of George himself, pushed the preparations forward. He obtained the commission—a document beheld by George with joy bordering on madness—fitted out the youngster with his first uniform and in all the other properties of his state, properties so incomparably precious in the lad's eyes, and boldly announced to Mrs. Washington that George must join his ship at once.

Then she yielded, and went through a day or two of anguish which brought the first streaks of white into her beautiful hair; George thanked her with tears in his eyes, and vowed she should never regret her generosity. All his confidence returned, and he told her of his joy, of his hopes of distinction, and they clung together lovingly and tearfully, every barrier broken down between them, and both so happy in this reunion of the heart that all strain and dissension seemed forgotten forever. Lawrence hovered near, wildly anxious now to get George away, telling himself that at any moment some interfering relative or the arrival of Joseph's letter already overdue, might disastrously alter the situation.

### A Bitter Disappointment

Evidently George was the favorite in his own family. Young as he was his mother relied upon him, and felt that she could not live without her eldest son. His half-brothers were exceedingly fond of him. "Brother, at once and son," George was fourteen years younger than Lawrence, the eldest of all the children, who naturally looked after the lad's education. As Mrs. Lawrence Washington shared her husband's fondness for George, he spent much of his time at Mount Vernon, which estate was now named after Admiral Vernon, commander-in-chief in the West Indies, and hero of Porto Bello and Carthagera (on and near the Isthmus of Panama) under whom Lawrence had served as captain.

Of course, Lawrence was the boy's *beau ideal*, whose military experiences furnished zest to his school games, and must have given a pronounced bent to George Washington's later life. Lawrence's associations led him to believe that a naval career might offer the most favorable future to his favorite brother. George was now fourteen, an age when lads in all climes are most attracted to "a life on the ocean wave." Mary Washington was unable to resist Lawrence's urgent appeals and her own son's entreaties. But to gain a little time, in her despair, she wrote to ask the advice of her brother, Joseph Ball, a lawyer in London. The six months then required to receive a reply from England, was a time of the tensest suspense for both mother and son. Meanwhile a warship, which seemed to George like the one golden opportunity of his life, waited at anchor in the Potomac, a little below Mount Vernon. No letter came and, as the man-of-war was about to weigh anchor, Lawrence and George obtained the mother's agonized consent to placing the boy's little sailor chest on board. When George, radiant in his new uniform, was just ready to ship as a "middy" the long-looked-for letter from Uncle Joseph



arrived, earnestly advising against a naval career, so full of hardships and humiliations for younger sons of families without much influence. This, after the strain and anguish of months, was too much for Mary Washington's mother-heart. She broke down utterly, and in tears and desperation, clung to George, imploring him not to leave his widowed mother in her grief and loneliness.

*The Washington Story-Calendar*, Wayne Whipple, March 6 to 12, 1910.

### Uncle Joseph's Letter

STRATFORD-BY-BOW, 19th of May, 1747.

"I understand that you are advised and have some thoughts of putting your son George to sea. I think he had better be put apprentice to a tinker, for a common sailor before the mast has by no means the common liberty of the subject; for they will press him from a ship where he has fifty shillings a month and make him take twenty-three, and cut and slash and use him like a negro, or rather like a dog. And, as to any considerable preferment in the navy, it is not to be expected, as there are always so many gaping for it here who have interest, and he has none. And if he should get to be master of a Virginia ship, (which it is very difficult to do) a planter that has three or four hundred acres of land and three or four slaves, if he be industrious, may live more comfortably, and leave his family in better bread, than such a master of a ship can. . . . He must not be too hasty to be rich, but go on gently and with patience, as things will naturally go. This method, without aiming at being a fine gentleman before his time, will carry a man more comfortably and surely through the world than going to sea, unless it be a great chance indeed.

"I pray God keep you and yours.

"Your loving brother,

"JOSEPH BALL."

### How He Gave It All up

"Will you come to my room, George?"

"In a minute, mother," answered George, rising and darting up-stairs.

He would show himself to her in his uniform. He had the natural pride in it that might have been expected, and, as he slipped quickly into it and put the dashing cap on his fair hair and stuck his dirk into his belt, he could not help a thrill of boyish vanity. He went straight to his mother's room, where she stood awaiting him.

The first glance at her face struck a chill to his heart. There was a look of pale and quiet determination on it that was far from encouraging. Nevertheless, George spoke up promptly.

"My warrant, mother, is up-stairs, sent me, as my brother wrote you, by Admiral Vernon. And my brother, out of his kindness, had all my outfit made for me in Alexandria. I am to join the *Bellona* frigate within the month."

"Will you read this letter, my son?" was Madam Washington's answer, handing him a letter.

George took it from her. He recognized the handwriting of his uncle, Joseph Ball, in England. It ran, after the beginning: "'I understand you are advised and have some thoughts of putting your son George to sea.'" George stopped in surprise, and looked at his mother.

"I suppose," she said, quietly, "that he has heard that your brother Lawrence mentioned to me months ago that you wished to join the king's land or sea service, but my brother's words are singularly apt now."

George continued to read.

"'I think he had better be put apprentice to a tinker, for a common sailor before the mast has by no means the common liberty of the subject, for they will press him from ship to ship, where he has fifty shillings a month, and make him take twenty-three, and cut and slash and use him like a dog.'"

George read this with amazement.

"My uncle evidently does not understand that I never had any intention of going to sea as a common sailor," he said, his face flushing, "and I am astonished that he should think such a thing."

"Read on," said his mother, quietly.

"And as to any considerable preferment in the navy, it is not to be expected, as there are so many gaping for it who have interest, and he has none."

George folded the letter, and handed it back to his mother respectfully.

"Forgive me, mother," said he, "but I think my uncle Joseph a very ignorant man, and especially ignorant of my prospects in life."

"George!" cried his mother, reproachfully.

George remained silent. He saw coming an impending conflict, the first of their lives, between his mother and himself.

"My brother," said Madam Washington, after a pause, "is a man of the world. He knows much more than I, a woman who has seen but little of it, and much more than a youth like you, George."

"He does not know better than my brother, who has been the best and kindest of brothers, who thought he was doing me the greatest service in getting me this warrant, and who at his own expense, prepared me for it."

Both mother and son spoke calmly, and even quietly, but two red spots burned in Madam Washington's face, while George felt himself growing whiter every moment.

"Your brother, doubtless, meant kindly towards you, for that I shall be ever grateful but I never gave my consent—I never shall give it," she said.

"I am sorry to hear you say that, mother," answered George, presently—"more sorry than I know how to say. For, although you are my dear and honored mother, you cannot choose my life for me, providing the life I choose is

respectable, and I live honestly and like a gentleman, as I always shall, I hope."

The mother and son faced each other, pale and determined. It struck home to Madam Washington that now she could not clip her eaglet's wings. She asked, in a low voice:

"Do you intend to disobey me, my son?"

"Don't force me to do it, mother!" cried George, losing his calmness, and becoming deeply agitated. "I think my honor is engaged to my brother and Admiral Vernon, and I feel in my heart that I have a right to choose my own future course. I promise that I will never discredit you; but I cannot—I cannot obey you in this."

"You do refuse, then, my son?" said Madam Washington. She spoke in a low voice, and her beautiful eyes looked straight into George's as if challenging him to resist their influence; but George, although his own eyes filled with tears, yet answered her gently:

"Mother, I must."

Madam Washington said no more, but turned away from him. The boy's heart and mind were in a whirl. Some involuntary power seemed compelling him to act as he did, without any volition on his part. Suddenly his mother turned, with tears streaming down her face and coming swiftly towards him, clasped him in her arms.

"My son, my best-beloved child!" she cried, weeping. "Do not break my heart by leaving me. I did not know until this moment how much I loved you. It is hard for a parent to plead with a child, but I beg, I implore you, if you have any regard for your mother's peace of mind, to give up the sea." And with sobs and tears, such as George had never before seen her shed, she clung to him and covered his face and hair, and even his hands, with kisses.

The boy stood motionless, stunned by an outbreak of emotion so unlike anything he had ever seen in his mother before. Calm, reticent, and undemonstrative, she had

shown a Spartan firmness in her treatment of her children until this moment. In a flash like lightning George saw that it was not that foolish letter which had influenced her, but there was a fierceness of mother love, all unsuspected in that deep and quiet nature, for him, and for him alone. This trembling, sobbing woman, calling him all fond names, and saying to him, "George, I would go upon my knees if that would move you," his mother! And the appeal overpowered him as much by its novelty as its power. Like her he began to tremble, and when she saw this she held him closer to her, and cried, "My son, will you abandon me, or will you abandon your own will this once?"

There was a short pause, and then George spoke, in a voice he scarcely knew, it was so strange:

"Mother, I will give up my commission."

*A Virginia Cavalier, Molly Elliot Seawell, p. 188.*

### How George "Jolted It off"

Ever since I had been at Mr. Williams's school, I had a liking for the surveying of land, and had later been allowed to further inform myself by attending upon Mr. Genn, the official surveyor of Westmoreland, a man very honest and most accurate. Indeed, I had so well learned this business that I became, to my great joy, of use to Lawrence and some of his neighbors, especially to William Fairfax, who had at first much doubt as to how far my skill might be trusted.

Meanwhile various occupations for me were considered and discussed by my elders. The sea was less favored in Virginia than at the North; but many captains of merchant ships were in those days, like my father, of the better class, and my brothers, who saw in me no great promise, believed that if I went to sea as a sailor I might be helped in time to a ship, and have my share in the prosperous London trade.

Like many boys, I inclined to this life. I remind myself of it here because it has been said that I was intended

at this time to serve the king as a midshipman, which was never the case. Meanwhile,—for this was an affair long talked about,—my mother's brother, Joseph Ball, wrote to her from London, May 19, 1747, that the sea was a dog's life, and, unless a lad had great influence, was a poor affair, and the navy no better. Upon this my mother wrote, . . . and at last hurried to Mount Vernon, and so prevailed by her tears that my small chest was brought back to land from a ship in the river.

My brother Lawrence comforted me in my disappointment, saying there were many roads in life, and that only one had been barred. I remember that I burst into tears, when once I was alone, and rushed off to the stables and got a horse, and rode away at a great pace. This has always done me good, and, somehow, settled my mind; for I have never felt, as I believe a Latin writer said, that care sits behind a horseman. I jolted mine off, but for days would not have any one talk to me of the matter. Even as a lad, I had unwillingness to recur to a thing when once it was concluded, and that is so to this day.

*The Youth of Washington, Told in the Form of an Autobiography*, S. Weir Mitchell, M.D., p. 59.

## CHAPTER IV

### GEORGE AND THE FAIRFAX FAMILY

#### Lord Fairfax's Friendship for Young Washington

George was highly favored in having four homes or places where he could "make himself at home"—his mother's house, of course; his brother Austin's, where the young wife laughed at the lad for imitating her husband; at Mount Vernon, where Mrs. Lawrence shared her husband's fondness for him, and Belvoir, where his eldest brother's wife, having been a member of the family, made the Fairfaxes and Washingtons connections by marriage. Mr. Fairfax, (frequently styled Sir William) besides his own estate, controlled vast stretches of Virginia country belonging to a wealthy cousin, Lord Thomas Fairfax, who had been a leader in English society, as the friend of Addison and Steele, and had even written for the "Spectator." But it was related that this nobleman had been betrothed to a lady of beauty and rank, who, after all the wedding preparations were made, jilted him for a little higher title, marrying a duke instead.

Enraged and humiliated, Lord Fairfax retired from society and sought the seclusion of his wild estates in Virginia, where he spent the rest of his long life in bitterness against womankind. While at Belvoir, he, like everyone else, was favorably impressed with George Washington. The sincere friendship of the accomplished nobleman proved a lifelong advantage to the younger man. It was through the penetration and kindness of Lord Fairfax that George kept on with his surveying, though the Washington family deemed it rather beneath the dignity of a Virginia gentleman. His lordship, being an able man of affairs, as

well as a shrewd man of the world, was disposed to advise and warn his bashful young friend, with whose diffidence he had the keenest sympathy. Also, the influence of his lordship's excellent literary taste was manifested in George's reading and in the clear, direct, simple style of writing which characterized the correspondence of both men through life.

George and his elderly companion used to ride across country and often went fox-hunting together. Sometimes they rode side by side for hours without either speaking a word. At other times Lord Fairfax, always taciturn in society, would talk freely about Oxford and his varied experiences "at home" (in England). His lordship's chief warning, however, was against women.

*The Washington Story-Calendar*, Wayne Whipple, March 27 to April 2, 1910.

### **Fox-hunting with Lord Fairfax**

Whatever may have been the soothing effect of the female society by which he was surrounded at Belvoir, the youth found a more effectual remedy for his love melancholy in the company of Lord Fairfax. His lordship was a staunch fox-hunter, and kept horses and hounds in the English style. The hunting season had arrived. The neighborhood abounded with sport but fox-hunting in Virginia required bold and skillful horsemanship. He found Washington as bold as himself in the saddle, and eager to follow the hounds. He forthwith took him into peculiar favor; made him his hunting companion; and it was probably under the tuition of this hard-riding old nobleman that the youth imbibed that fondness for the chase for which he was afterwards remarked.

Their fox-hunting intercourse was attended with more important results. His lordship's possessions beyond the Blue Ridge had never been regularly settled nor surveyed. Lawless intruders—squatters as they were called, were planting themselves along the finest streams and in the







FOX-HUNTING WITH LORD FAIRFAX

richest valleys and virtually taking possession of the country. It was the anxious desire of Lord Fairfax to have these lands examined, surveyed, and proportioned out into lots, preparatory to ejecting these interlopers or bringing them to reasonable terms. In Washington, notwithstanding his youth, he beheld one fit for the task—having noticed the exercises in surveying which he kept up while at Mount Vernon, and the aptness and exactness with which every process was executed. He was well calculated, too, by his vigor and activity, his courage and hardihood, to cope with the wild country to be surveyed, and with its still wilder inhabitants. The proposition had only to be offered to Washington to be eagerly accepted. It was the very kind of occupation for which he had been diligently training himself. All the preparations required by one of his simple habits were soon made, and in a very few days he was ready for his first expedition into the wilderness.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. 1, p. 63.

### Encouraged to Take up Surveying

At the age of fifteen, in the fall of 1747, I went once more, for a time to reside with Lawrence at Mount Vernon, where it was to be finally determined what I should do for a livelihood. As I look back on this period of my life, I perceive that it was the occasion of many changes. I saw much more of George William Fairfax and George Mason, ever since my friends, and was often with George's father, the master of Belvoir, only four miles from Mount Vernon.

There came often, for long visits, William's cousin, Lord Fairfax, over whose great estates in the valley William was the agent. I learned later that when first his Lordship saw me he pronounced me to be a too sober little prig—and this, no doubt, I was; but after a time, when he began to show such interest in me as flattered my pride and pleased my brother Lawrence. At this period Lord Fairfax was a tall man and gaunt, very ruddy and near-sighted.

It was natural that as a lad I should be pleased by the notice this gentleman, the only nobleman I had ever seen, began to take of me. My fondness for surveying he took more seriously than did my own people, and told me once it was a noble business, because it had to be truthful, and because it kept a man away from men, and, especially, from women. I did not then understand what he meant, and did not think it proper to inquire.

I owed to this gentleman opportunities which led on to others, and to no one else have I been more indebted. I trust and believe that I let go no chance in after life to serve this admirable family.

*The Youth of Washington, Told in the Form of an Autobiography*, S. Weir Mitchell, M.D., p. 67.

### **A Full-length Portrait of Washington at Sixteen**

He had just passed his sixteenth birthday. He was tall and muscular, approaching the stature of more than six feet which he afterwards attained. He was not yet filled out to manly proportions, but was rather spare, after the fashion of youth. He had a well-shaped, active figure, symmetrical except for the unusual length of the arms, indicating uncommon strength. His light brown hair was drawn back from a broad forehead, and grayish-blue eyes looked happily, and perhaps a trifle soberly, on the pleasant Virginia world about him. The face was open and manly, with a square, massive jaw, and a general expression of calmness and strength. "Fair and florid," big and strong, he was, take him for all in all, as fine a specimen of his race as could be found in the English colonies.

Let us look a little closer through the keen eyes of one who studied many faces to good purpose. The great painter of portraits, Gilbert Stuart, tells us of Washington that he never saw in any man such large eye-sockets, or such breadth of nose and forehead between the eyes, and that he read there the evidence of the strongest passions possible to

human nature. John Bernard, the actor, a good observer, too, saw in Washington's face in 1797, the signs of an habitual conflict and mastery of passions, witnessed by the compressed mouth and deeply indented brow. The problem had been solved then; but in 1748, passion and will alike slumbered, and no man could tell which would prevail or whether they would work together to great purpose or go jarring on to nothingness. He rises up to us out of the past in that early springtime a fine, handsome, athletic boy, beloved by those about him, who found him a charming companion and did not guess that he might be a terribly dangerous foe. He rises up instinct with life and strength, a being capable, as we know, of great things whether for good or evil, with hot blood pulsing in his veins and beating in his heart, with violent passions and relentless will still undeveloped, and no one in all that jolly, generous Virginian society even dimly dreamed what that development would be, or what it would mean to the world.

*George Washington, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. I, p. 55.*

### Two Georges Go Surveying

We set out on March 11, 1748, George William Fairfax and I, with two servants and a led horse, loaded with a pack and such baggage as could not be carried in saddle-bags. I was at this time ill, not having recovered from an attack of the ague; but the action of the horse and the feeling of adventure helped me, so that in a day or two I left off taking of Jesuits' bark, and was none the worse. . . .

As we were soon joined by my old master in surveying, James Genn, I learned a great deal more of his useful art, and usually earned a doubloon a day, but sometimes six pistoles. Although the idea of daily wages was unpleasant to Virginians of my class, I remember that it made me feel independent, and set a sort of value upon me which reasonably fed my esteem of myself, which was, I do believe, never too great.

Our journey was without risks, except the rattlesnakes, and the many smaller vermin which inhabited the blankets in the cabins of the squatters.

I remember with pleasure the evening when I first saw the great fertile valley after we came through Ashby's Gap in the Blue Ridge. The snows were still melting and the roads the worst that could ever be seen, even in Virginia. The greatness of the trees I remember, and my surprise that the Indians should have so much good invention in their names, as when they called the river of the valley the Shen-an-do-ah—that is, the Daughter of the Stars; but why so named I never knew.

In this great vale were the best of Lord Fairfax's lands. Near to where this stream joins the Potomac were many clearings, of which we had to make surveys and insist on his lordship's ownership. Here were no hardships, and much pleasure in the pursuit of game, especially wild turkeys. I learned to cook, and how to make a bivouac comfortable, and many things which are part of the education of the woods. Only four nights did I sleep in a bed, and then had more small company than I liked to entertain. . . .

After one night in a Dutch cabin I liked better a bear-skin and the open air, for it was not to my taste to lie down on a straw—very populous—or on a skin, with a man, wife, and squalling babies, like dogs and cats, and to cast lots who should be nearest the fire.

I did not like these people, and the Indians interested me more. Genn understood their tongue well enough to talk with them, and the way they had of sign-language pleased Lord Fairfax, because, he said, you could not talk too much in signs or easily abuse your neighbor; but I found they had a sign for cutting a man's throat, and it seemed to me that was quite enough, and worse than abuse. Mr. Genn warned me that one of their great jokes was, when shaking hands with white men, to squeeze so as to give pain. Being warned, I gave the chief who was called Big

Bear such a grip that, in his surprise, he cried out, and thus amused the other warriors.

*The Youth of Washington, Told in the Form of an Autobiography, S. Weir Mitchell, M.D., p. 90.*

### **He Went in a Schoolboy and Came out the First Soldier in the Colonies**

Lord Fairfax and Washington became fast friends. They hunted the fox together, and hunted him hard. They engaged in all the rough sports and perilous excitements that Virginia winter life could afford, and the boy's bold and skilful riding, his love of sports and his fine temper, commended him to the warm and affectionate interest of the old nobleman. Other qualities, too, the experienced man of the world saw in his young companion: a high and persistent courage, robust and calm sense, and above all, unusual force of will and character. Washington impressed profoundly everybody with whom he was brought into personal contact, a fact which is one of the most marked features of his character and career, and one which deserves study more than almost any other. Lord Fairfax was no exception to the rule. He saw in Washington not simply a promising, brave, open-hearted boy, diligent in practising his profession, and whom he was anxious to help, but something more; something which so impressed him that he confided to this lad a task which, according to its performance, would affect both his fortune and his peace. In a word, he trusted Washington and told him, as the spring of 1748 was opening, to go forth and survey the vast Fairfax estates beyond the Ridge, define their boundaries, and save them from future litigation. With this commission from Lord Fairfax, Washington entered on the first period of his career. He passed it on the frontier, fighting nature, the Indians, and the French. He went in a schoolboy; he came out the first soldier in the colonies, and one of the leading men of Virginia.

*George Washington, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. I, p. 52.*

VOL. I—7

## From Washington's First Journal

Fryday March 11th 1747-8. Began my Journey in Company with George Fairfax, Esqr.; we travell'd this day 40 Miles to Mr. George Neavels in Prince William County.

Saturday March 12th this Morning Mr. James Genn y<sup>e</sup> surveyor came to us, we travel'd over y<sup>e</sup> Blue Ridge to Cap<sup>t</sup> Ashbys on Shannondoah River, Nothing remarkable happen'd.

Sunday March 13 Rode to his Lordship's Quarter about 4 Miles higher up y<sup>e</sup> River we went through most beautiful Groves of Sugar Trees & spent y<sup>e</sup> best part of y<sup>e</sup> Day in admiring y<sup>e</sup> Trees & richness of y<sup>e</sup> Land.

Monday 14th We sent our Baggage to Cap<sup>t</sup> Hites (near Frederick Town) went ourselves down y<sup>e</sup> River about 16 Miles to Cap<sup>t</sup> Isaac Penningtons (the Land exceeding Rich & Fertile all y<sup>e</sup> way produces abundance of Grain Hemp Tobacco &c) in order to Lay of some Lands on Cates Marsh & Long Marsh.

Tuesday 15th We set out early with Intent to Run round y<sup>e</sup> s<sup>d</sup> Land but being taken in a Rain & it Increasing very fast obliged us to return, it clearing about one oClock & our time being too Precious to Loose we a second time ventured out & Worked hard till Night & then returned to Penningtons we got our Suppers & was Lighted into a Room & I not being so good a Woodsman as y<sup>e</sup> rest of my Company striped myself very orderly & went in to y<sup>e</sup> Bed as they called it when to my surprize I found it to be nothing but a Little Straw—matted together without Sheets or any thing else but one thread Bear blanket with double its weight of Vermin such as Lice Fleas &c. I was glad to get up (as soon as y<sup>e</sup> Light was carried from us) I put on my Cloths and Lays as my Companions. Had we not been very tired I am sure we should not have slept much that night I made a Promise not to Sleep so from that time forward chusing



rather to sleep in y<sup>e</sup> open Air before a fire as will appear hereafter.

. . . . .

Wednesday 16th We set out early & finished about one oClock & then Travell'd up to Frederick Town where our Baggage came to us we cleaned ourselves (to get Rid of y<sup>e</sup> Game we had caught y<sup>e</sup> Night before) & took a Review of y<sup>e</sup> Town & thence returned to our Lodgings where we had a good Dinner prepar'd for us Wine & Rum Punch in Plenty & a good Feather Bed with clean Sheets which was a very agreeable regale.

. . . . .

Sunday 20 finding y<sup>e</sup> River not much abated we in y<sup>e</sup> Evening Swam our horses over & carried them to Charles Polks in Maryland for Pasturage till y<sup>e</sup> next Morning.

Monday 21st We went over in a Canoe & Travell'd up Maryland side all y<sup>e</sup> Day in a Continued Rain to Coll<sup>o</sup> Cresaps right against y<sup>e</sup> Mouth of y<sup>e</sup> South Branch about 40 Miles from Polks I believe y<sup>e</sup> worst Road that ever was trod by Man or Beast.

Tuesday 22d Continued Rain and y<sup>e</sup> Freshes kept us at Cresaps.

Wednesday 23d Rain'd till about two oClock & Clear'd when we were agreeably surpris'd at y<sup>e</sup> sight of thirty odd Indians coming from War with only one Scalp. We had some Liquor with us of which we gave them Part it elevating their Spirits put them in y<sup>e</sup> Humour of Dauncing of whom we had a War Daunce there manner of Dauncing is as follows Viz They Clear a Large Circle & make a Great Fire in y<sup>e</sup> middle then seats themselves around it y<sup>e</sup> Speaker makes grand Speech telling them in what Manner they are to Daunce after he has finish'd y<sup>e</sup> best Dauncer Jumps about y<sup>e</sup> Ring in a most comicle Manner he is followed by y<sup>e</sup> Rest then begins there Musicians to Play y<sup>e</sup> Musick is a Pot half of Water with Deerskin Streched over it as tight as it can & a

goard with some Shott in it to Rattle & a Piece of an horses Tail to it to make it look fine y<sup>e</sup> one keeps Rattling and y<sup>e</sup> other Drumming all y<sup>e</sup> while y<sup>e</sup> others is Dauncing

*Journal of My Journey Over the Mountains, by George Washington while Surveying for Lord Thomas Fairfax, Baron of Cameron, in the Northern Neck of Virginia, Beyond the Blue Ridge.*

Copied from the Original with Literal Exactness, and Edited with Notes by J. M. Toner, M.D., pp. 15 to 33.

### How Lord Fairfax Read Washington's First Journal

It was a winter night. Lord Fairfax had gathered about him a merry company, Washington was there, but grave and reserved in contrast with the others. Mr. Gist, the explorer, was present, and with him had come young Owler, an Indian runner, to hear the violins. A number of young hunters and trappers and fur-traders had stopped at the Court for the night to share the bountiful baron's hospitality.

The stories of the surveys of his immense estates were Lord Fairfax's delight. Washington kept journals of his surveys, and Mr. Gist was a natural story-teller.

Lord Fairfax spread the journal of young Washington and its records of surveys out on the great oak table. He began to read the diary. The men listened eagerly, ready to applaud any incident of the narrative which should excite their interest.

[After his lordship had read the diary through, he said:]

"Washington is a brave boy, it is hardship that makes men. A man's power in life is in proportion to the resistance he meets when he is young. George will become a strong man one day."

The journal gives a correct view of the manner that the young surveyor passed a period of his early days. He was then scarcely more than a boy.

*The Boys of Greenway Court, Hezekiah Butterworth, pp. 77 to 88.*

### Conflicting Claims to the Ohio Country

While George was acting as county surveyor, and for several years afterward, the trouble between the English and French for the settlement of the country along the Ohio river was rapidly approaching a crisis. The French claimed all the territory watered by the tributaries of the Mississippi river by right of the discoveries of Joliet and Père Marquette of the Mississippi in the north, and their settlement of Louisiana in the south.

The English based their claim on a supposed purchase of all the territory west of the mountains and north of the Ohio from the Five Nations of Indians in council. But "possession is eleven points in the law," and the French were not only coming down from Canada and making settlements in the disputed territory, but also making friends with the Indians. This they were able to do because of the work of French Catholic missionaries and of the fact that many of the French pioneers had intermarried with and lived among the red men.

Virginia was especially interested in this dispute, as a sort of syndicate of gentlemen had formed what was known as the Ohio Company, whose business was to traffic with the natives and settle the country.

*The Washington Story-Calendar*, Wayne Whipple, May 8 to 14, 1910.

### Labored Love Lines

Who [the] "Low Land Beauty" was has been the source of much speculation, but the question is still unsolved, every suggested damsel—Lucy Grymes, Mary Bland, Betsy Fauntleroy, *et al.*—being either impossible or the evidence wholly inadequate. But in the same journal which contains the draughts of these letters is a motto poem—

"'Twas Perfect Love before  
But Now I do adore"—

followed by the words "Young M. A. his W [ife?]," and as it

was a fashion of the time to couple the initials of one's well-beloved with such sentiments, a slight clue is possibly furnished. Nor was this the only rhyme that his emotions led to his inscribing in his journal: and he confided to it the following:

" Oh Ye Gods why should my Poor Resistless Heart  
Stand to oppose thy might and Power  
At Last surrender to cupid's feather'd Dart  
And now lays Bleeding every Hour  
For her that's Pityless of my grief and Woes  
And will not on me Pity take  
He sleep amongst my most inveterate Foes  
And with gladness never wish to wake  
In deluding sleepings let my eyelids close  
That in an enraptured Dream I may  
In a soft lulling sleep and gentle repose  
Possess those joys denied by Day."

However woe-begone the young lover was, he does not seem to have been wholly lost to others of the sex? and at this time he was able to indite an acrostic to another charmer, which, if incomplete, nevertheless proves that there was a "midland" beauty as well, the lady being presumptively some member of the family of Alexanders, who had a plantation near Mount Vernon.

" From your bright sparkling Eyes I was undone;  
Rays, you have; more transperent than the Sun,  
Amidst its glory in the rising Day  
None can you equal in your bright array;  
Constant in your calm and unspotted Mind;  
Equal to all, but will to none Prove kind,  
So knowing, seldom one so young, you'll Find.  
  
Ah! woe's me, that I should Love and conceal  
Long have I wish'd, but never dare reveal,  
Even though severely Loves Pains I feel;  
Xerxes that great, was't free from Cupids Dart,  
And all the greatest Heroes, felt the smart."

*The True George Washington*, Paul Leicester Ford, p. 86.

**"I Used Often to Wish He Would Talk More"**

In his earliest days, there was perseverance and completeness in all his undertakings. Nothing was left half done, or done in a hurried and slovenly manner. The habit of mind thus cultivated continued throughout life; so that however complicated his tasks and overwhelming his cares, in the arduous and hazardous situations in which he was often placed, he found time to do everything, and to do it well. He had acquired the magic of method, which of itself works wonders.

In one of these manuscript memorials of his practical studies and exercises, we have come upon some documents singularly in contrast with all that we have just cited, and with his apparently unromantic character. In a word, there are evidences in his own handwriting, that, before he was fifteen years of age, he had conceived a passion for some unknown beauty, so serious as to disturb his otherwise well-regulated mind, and to make him really unhappy. Why this juvenile attachment was a source of unhappiness we have no positive means of ascertaining. Perhaps the object of it may have considered him a mere schoolboy, and treated him as such, or his own shyness may have been in his way, and his "rules for behavior and conversation" may as yet have sat awkwardly on him, and rendered him formal and ungainly when he most sought to please. Even in later years he was apt to be silent and embarrassed in female society. "He was a very bashful young man," said an old lady, whom he used to visit when they were both in their nonage, "I used often to wish that he would talk more."

*Life of George Washington, Washington Irving, Vol. I, p. 57.*

**County Surveyor at Seventeen**

About this time the influence of Lord Fairfax and my brothers obtained for me the place of surveyor of the county of Culpeper. I saw, a few years ago, in the records of Cul-

peper Court House, under date of July 20, 1749, that George Washington, gentleman, produced a commission from the president and masters of William and Mary College appointing him to be a surveyor of the county, whereupon he took the oath to his Majesty's person and government and subscribed the abjuration oath, the test, etc.

I recall now the pleasure this formal appointment gave me. Although I was then but seventeen years old, I was much trusted and was soon busily employed, because of my exactness, and because it was known that I could not be bribed; and thus for over two years I pursued this occupation. His Lordship had long since left his cousin's house of Belvoir and gone to live in the valley, in his steward's house, which he now bettered and enlarged for his own use, meaning soon to build a great mansion-house, which he never did.

*The Youth of Washington, Told in the Form of an Autobiography, S. Weir Mitchell, M.D., p. 96.*

## CHAPTER V

### GEORGE AND HIS BROTHER LAWRENCE

#### **"They Mean to Steal Our Country"**

Mr. Thomas Lee, president of the council of Virginia, took the lead in the concerns of the [Ohio] company at the outset, and by many has been considered its founder. On his death, which soon took place, Lawrence Washington had the chief management. His enlightened mind and liberal spirit shone forth in his earliest arrangements. He wished to form the settlements with Germans from Pennsylvania. Being dissenters, however, they would be obliged, on becoming residents within the jurisdiction of Virginia, to pay parish rates, and maintain a clergyman of the Church of England, though they might not understand his language nor relish his doctrines. Lawrence sought to have them exempted from this double tax on purse and conscience.

"It has ever been my opinion," said he, "and I hope it ever will be, that restraints on conscience are cruel in regard to those on whom they are imposed, and injurious to the country imposing them. England, Holland, and Prussia I may quote as examples, and much more Pennsylvania, which has flourished under that delightful liberty, so as to become the admiration of every man who considers the short time it has been settled. . . . This colony [Virginia] was settled in the latter part of Charles the First's time, and during the usurpation, by the zealous churchmen; and that spirit, which was then brought in, has ever since continued; so that, except a few Quakers, we have no dissenters. But what has been the consequence? We have increased by slow degrees, whilst our neighboring colonies, whose natural advantages are greatly inferior to ours, have become populous."

Such were the enlightened views of this brother of our Washington, to whom the latter owed much of his moral and mental training. The company proceeded to make preparations for their colonizing scheme. Goods were imported from England suited to the Indian trade, or for presents to the chiefs. Rewards were promised to veteran warriors and hunters among the natives acquainted with the woods and mountains, for the best route to the Ohio. Before the company had received its charter, however, the French were in the field. Early in 1749, the Marquis de la Galissonniere, Governor of Canada, despatched Celeron de Bienville, an intelligent officer, at the head of three hundred men, to the banks of the Ohio, to make peace, as he said, between the tribes that had become embroiled with each other during the late war, and to renew the French possessions of the country.

Celeron de Bienville distributed presents among the Indians, made speeches reminding them of former friendship, and warned them not to trade with the English. He furthermore nailed leaden plates to trees, and buried others in the earth, at the confluence of the Ohio and its tributaries, bearing inscriptions purporting that all the lands on both sides of the rivers to their sources appertained, as in foregone times, to the crown of France. The Indians gazed at these mysterious plates with wondering eyes, but surmised their purport. "They mean to steal our country from us," murmured they; and they determined to seek protection from the English.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. 1, p. 78.

### **The Ohio Company Sends Christopher Gist**

It was some time later in the same autumn that the Ohio Company brought their plans into operation, and despatched an agent to explore the lands upon the Ohio and its branches as low as the Great Falls, take note of their fitness for cultivation, of the passes of the mountains, the



courses and bearings of the rivers, and the strength and disposition of the native tribes. The man chosen for the purpose was Christopher Gist, a hardy pioneer, experienced in woodcraft and Indian life, who had his home on the banks of the Yadkin, near the boundary line of Virginia and North Carolina. He was allowed a woodsman or two for the service of the expedition. He set out on the 31st of October, from the banks of the Potomac, by an Indian path which the hunters had pointed out, leading from Wills' Creek, since called Fort Cumberland, to the Ohio. Indian paths and Buffalo tracks are the primitive highways of the wilderness. Passing the Juniata, he crossed the ridges of the Alleghany, arrived at Shannopin, a Delaware village on the south-east side of the Ohio, or rather of that upper branch of it, now called the Allegheny, swam his horses across that river, and descending along its valley arrived at Logstown, an important Indian village a little below the site of the present city of Pittsburg. Here usually resided Tanacharisson, a Seneca chief of great note, being head sachem of the mixed tribes which had migrated to the Ohio and its branches. He was usually surnamed the Half-King, being subordinate to the Iroquois confederacy. The chief was absent at this time, as were most of his people, it being the hunting season. George Croghan, the envoy from Pennsylvania, with Montour his interpreter, had passed through Logstown a week previously, on his way to the Twightwees and other tribes, on the Miami branch of the Ohio. Scarce any one was to be seen about the village except some of Croghan's rough people, whom he had left behind—"reprobate Indian traders," Gist terms them. They regarded the latter with a jealous eye, suspecting him of some rivalry in trade, or designs on the Indian lands; and intimated significantly that "he would never go home safe."

Gist knew the meaning of such hints from men of this stamp in the lawless depths of the wilderness; but quieted their suspicions by letting them know that he was on public business, and on good terms with their great man, George

Croghan, to whom he despatched a letter. He took his departure from Logstown, however, as soon as possible, preferring, as he said, the solitude of the wilderness to such company.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. 1, p. 81.

### **"A Most Delightful Country"**

At Beaver Creek, a few miles below the village, he [Gist] left the river and struck into the interior of the present State of Ohio. Here he overtook George Croghan at Muskingum, a town of Wyandots and Mingoes. He had ordered all the traders in his employ who were scattered among the Indian villages, to rally at this town, where he had hoisted the English flag over his residence, and over that of the sachem. This was in consequence of the hostility of the French who had recently captured, in the neighborhood, three white men in the employ of Frazier, an Indian trader, and had carried them away prisoners to Canada.

Gist was well received by the people of Muskingum. They were indignant at the French violation of their territories, and the capture of their "English brothers." They had not forgotten the conduct of Celeron de Bienville in the previous year, and the mysterious plates which he had nailed against trees and sunk in the ground. "If the French claim the rivers which run into the lakes," said they, "those which run into the Ohio belong to us and to our brothers the English." And they were anxious that Gist should settle among them, and build a fort for their mutual defense.

A council of the nation was now held, in which Gist invited them, in the name of the Governor of Virginia, to visit that province, where a large present of goods awaited them, sent by their father, the great king, over the water to his Ohio children. The invitation was graciously received, but no answer could be given until a grand council of the western tribes had been held, which was to take place at Logstown in the ensuing spring.

Similar results attended visits made by Gist and Crogan to the Delawares and the Shawnees at their villages about the Scioto River; all promised to be at the gathering at Logstown. From the Shawnee village, near the mouth of the Scioto, the two emissaries shaped their course north two hundred miles, crossed the great Moneami, or Miami River, on a raft, swimming their horses; and on the 17th of February arrived at the Indian town of Piqua.

These journeys had carried Gist about a wide extent of country beyond the Ohio. It was rich and level, watered with streams and rivulets, and clad with noble forests of hickory, walnut, ash, poplar, sugar-maple, and wild cherry trees. Occasionally there were spacious plains covered with wild rye; natural meadows, with blue grass and clover; and buffaloes, thirty and forty at a time, grazing on them as in a cultivated pasture. Deer, elk, and wild turkeys abounded. "Nothing is wanted but cultivation," said Gist, "to make this a most delightful country." Cultivation has since proved the truth of his words. The country thus described is the present State of Ohio.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. I, p. 83.

### Major Washington's Broadsword Practice Interrupted

The French now prepared for hostile contingencies. They launched an armed vessel of unusual size on Lake Ontario; fortified their trading house at Niagara; strengthened their outposts, and advanced others on the upper waters of the Ohio. A stir of warlike preparation was likewise to be observed among the British colonies. It was evident that the adverse claims to the disputed territories, if pushed home, could only be settled by the stern arbitrament of the sword.

In Virginia, especially, the war spirit was manifest. The province was divided into military districts, each having an adjutant general, with the rank of major, and the pay of one hundred and fifty pounds a year, whose duty was to attend to the organization and equipment of the militia.

Such an appointment was sought by Lawrence Washington for his brother George. It shows what must have been the maturity of the mind of the latter, and the confidence inspired by his judicious conduct and aptness for business, that the post should not only be sought for him, but readily obtained; though he was yet but nineteen years of age. He proved himself worthy of the appointment.

He now set about preparing himself, with his usual method and assiduity, for his new duties. Virginia had among its floating population some military relics of the late Spanish war. Among these was a certain Adjutant Muse, a Westmoreland volunteer, who had served with Lawrence Washington in the campaigns in the West Indies, and had been with him in the attack on Carthagen. He now undertook to instruct his brother George in the art of war; lent him treatises on military tactics; put him through the manual exercises, and gave him some idea of evolutions in the field. Another of Lawrence's campaigning comrades was Jacob Van Braam, a Dutchman by birth; a soldier of fortune of the Dalgetty order; who had been in the British army, but was now out of service, and, professing to be a complete master of fence, recruited his slender purse in this time of military excitement, by giving the Virginian youth lessons in sword exercise.

Under the instructions of these veterans, Mount Vernon, from being a quiet rural retreat, where Washington, three years previously, had indited love ditties to his "lowland beauty," was suddenly transformed into a school of arms, as he practised the manual exercise with Adjutant Muse, or took lessons on the broadsword from Van Braam.

His martial studies, however, were interrupted for a time by the critical state of his brother's health. The constitution of Lawrence had always been delicate, and he had been obliged repeatedly to travel for a change of air. There were now pulmonary symptoms of a threatening nature, and by advice of his physicians he determined to pass a

winter in the West Indies, taking with him his favorite brother George as a companion. They accordingly sailed for Barbadoes on the 28th of September, 1751. George kept a journal of the voyage with log-book brevity; recording the wind and weather, but no events worth citation. They landed at Barbadoes on the 3d of November.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. I, p. 92.

### Arrival of the Washington Brothers at Barbadoes

*[George kept a Journal of this trip, which, though preserved, is torn and illegible in the places indicated by dots.]*

We were greatly alarmed with the cry of "Land!" at 4 A: M: We quitted our beds with surprise and found y<sup>e</sup> land plainly appearing at about 3 leagues distance, when by our reckonings we shou'd have been near 150 leagues to the windward—we were to leeward abt y<sup>e</sup> distance above mention'd, and had we been but 3 or 4 leagues more, we shou'd have been out of sight of the Island, run down the latitude and probably not have discovered. . . .

November 4th, 1751.—This morning received a card from Major Clarke, welcoming us to Barbadoes, with an invitation to breakfast and dine with him. We went,—myself with some reluctance, as the smallpox was in his family. We were received in the most kind and friendly manner by him. Mrs. Clarke was much indisposed, inso-much that we had not the pleasure of her company, but in her place officiated Miss Roberts, her niece, an agreeable young lady. After drinking tea we were again invited to Mr. Carter's, and desired to make his house ours until we could find lodgings agreeable to our wishes, which offer we accepted.

November 5th—Early this morning came Dr. Hilary, an eminent physician, recommended by Major Clarke, to

pass his opinion on my brother's disorder, which he did in a favorable light, giving great assurance that it was not so fixed but that a cure might be effectually made. In the cool of the evening we rode out, accompanied by Mr. Carter, to seek lodgings in the country, as the Doctor advised, and were perfectly ravished with the beautiful prospects, which every side presented to our view,—the fields of cane, corn, fruit-trees, &c., in a delightful green. We returned without accomplishing our intentions.

*Tuesday 6th.*—At Mr. Carter's, employing ourselves in writ<sup>s</sup> letters to be carried by the schooner *Fredericksburg*, Capt<sup>n</sup> Robinson, to Virginia. Received a card from Maj<sup>r</sup> Clarke wherein our companys were desired to dinner to-morrow, & and myself an invitation from M<sup>rs</sup>. Clarke & Miss Rob<sup>ts</sup> to come, and see the serp<sup>ts</sup> fir'd from guns, & I had the pleasure of seeing M<sup>rs</sup>. Clarke.

*Wednesday 7th.*—Dined at Maj<sup>r</sup> Clarke's; and by him was introduced to the Surveyor-Gen<sup>l</sup> & Judges Filey & Hackett, who likewise din'd there. In the evening they complaisantly accompanied us in another excursion in the country to choose such lodgings as most suited. We pitched on the house of Capt<sup>n</sup>. Croftan, commander of James Fort; he was desir'd to come to town next day to propose his terms. . . .

*Thursday 8th.*—Came Capt<sup>n</sup>. Croftan with his proposals which, tho extravagantly dear, my Brother was oblig'd to give:—£15 p<sup>r</sup> Month is his charge, exclusive of liquours and washing, which we find. In the evening we remov'd some of our things up and ourselves. It's very pleasantly situated and pretty, . . . the sea, ab<sup>t</sup> a mile from town. The prospect is extensive by land and pleasant by sea, as we command the prospect of Carlyle Bay, in such manner that none can go in or out without being open to our view.

*Washington's Barbadoes Journal, 1751-2, Edited, with Notes, by J. M. Toner, M.D., pp. 39 to 48.*

**"Beefsteak and Tripe" Club, "George Barnwell," and  
Smallpox**

*Friday 9th.*—We receiv'd a card from Maj<sup>r</sup> Clarke, inviting us to dine with him at Judge Maynard's on the morrow. He had a right to ask, being a member of the Club call'd the "Beefsteak & Tripe," instituted by himself.

We were genteelly receiv'd by Judge Satus Maynard & Lady, and agreeably entertain'd by the company. They have a meeting every Saturday, this being Col<sup>o</sup>. Maynard's. After dinner there was the greatest collection of fruits I have yet seen on a table. There was the Granadella, the Sappadilla, Pomegranate, Sweet Orange, Water Lemon, Forbidden Fruit, Apples, Guavas, &c., &c., &c. We receiv'd invitations from every gentleman there, & one, who also was there, tho not one of their Memb<sup>rs</sup>. Mr. Warren desir'd Maj<sup>r</sup> Clarke to shew us the way to his house. Mr. Hack<sup>t</sup> insisted on our coming to his, being his day to treat with beefsteak & tripe, but, above all, the invitation of Mr. Maynard was the most kind and friendly. He desir'd, and even insisted, as well as his lady, on our coming to spend some weeks with him, and promis'd nothing should be wanting to render our stay agreeable. My Br. promis'd he wou'd as soon as he was a little disengag'd from the Dr<sup>s</sup>. We return'd, and by . . . was invited to dine at . . . Clarke's the next day, by himself.

*Sunday 11th.*—Dressed in order for Church but got to town too late. Dined at Maj<sup>r</sup> Clarke's with y<sup>e</sup> S<sup>e</sup> G: [same gentlemen?] Went to Evening Service and return'd to our lodgings.

*Monday 12th.*—Receiv'd an afternoon visit from Capt. Petrie and an invitation to dine with him the next day.

. . . *13th.*—Dined at the Fort Needham, [where Capt. Petrie was in command] with some ladies. It's pretty

strongly fortified, and mounts about 36 guns within the fortifi<sup>n</sup>., but 2 facine batteries, m 51.

*Wednesday 14th.*—At our lodgings.

*Thursday 15th.*—Was treated with a play ticket by M<sup>r</sup>. Carter to see the Tragedy of "George Barnwell" acted: the characters of "Barnwell" and several others were said to be well perform'd. There was musick adapted and regularly conducted by M<sup>r</sup>.

*Saturday 17th.*—Was strongly attacked with the small-pox: sent for D<sup>r</sup>. Lanahan, whose attendance was very constant till my recovery and going out, which was not till Thursday, the 12th of December.

. . . *December 12th.*—Went to town; visited Maj<sup>r</sup> Clarke's family, (who kindly visited me in my illness, and contributed all they cou'd in send me the necessaries required in y<sup>e</sup> disorder) and dined with Maj<sup>r</sup>. Gaskens, a half-b<sup>r</sup>. to M<sup>rs</sup>. Clarke.

*Thursday 18th.*—Provided my sea store and dined with M<sup>r</sup>. Carter.

*Friday 19th.*—Got my clothes, store, &c., on board the *Industry*, Capt<sup>n</sup>. John Saunders, for Virginia.

*Saturday 21st.*— . . . At my lodgings . . . my Brother——

*Sunday 22d.*—Took my leave of my B<sup>r</sup>., Maj<sup>r</sup> Clarke, &c., and embarked on the *Industry*, Capt<sup>n</sup>. John Saunders, for Virginia. Weighed anchor and got out of Carlyle Bay ab<sup>t</sup> 12.



**Lawrence "Hurrying Home to His Grave !"**

After his recovery he made excursions about the island, noticing its soil, productions, fortifications, public works, and the manners of its inhabitants. While admiring the productiveness of the sugar plantations, he was shocked at the spendthrift habits of the planters, and their utter want of management.

"How wonderful," writes he, "that such people should be in debt, and not be able to indulge themselves in all the luxuries, as well as the necessities of life. Yet so it happens. Estates are often alienated for debts. How persons coming to estates of two, three, and four hundred acres can want, is to me most wonderful." How much does this wonder speak for his own scrupulous principle of always living within compass.

The residence in Barbadoes failed to have the anticipated effect on the health of Lawrence, and he determined to seek the sweet climate of Bermuda in the spring. He felt the absence from his wife, and it was arranged that George should return to Virginia, and bring her out to meet him at that island. Accordingly, . . . George set sail . . . [for] Virginia, where he arrived on the 1st February, 1752, after five weeks of stormy winter seafaring.

Lawrence remained through the winter at Barbadoes; but the very mildness of the climate relaxed and enervated him. He felt the want of the bracing winter weather to which he had been accustomed. Even the invariable beauty of the climate, the perpetual summer, wearied the restless invalid. "This is the finest island of the West Indies," said he; "but I own no place can please me without a change of seasons. We soon tire of the same prospect." A consolatory truth for the inhabitants of more capricious climes.

Still, some of the worst symptoms of his disorder had

disappeared, and he seemed to be slowly recovering; but the nervous restlessness and desire of change, often incidental to his malady, had taken hold of him, and early in March he hastened to Bermuda. He had come too soon. The keen air of early spring brought on an aggravated return of his worst symptoms. "I have now got to my last refuge," writes he to a friend, "where I must receive my final sentence, which at present Dr. Forbes will not pronounce. He leaves me, however, I think, like a criminal condemned, though not without hopes of reprieve. But this I am to obtain by meritoriously abstaining from flesh of every sort, all strong liquour, and by riding as much as I can bear. These are the only terms on which I am to hope for life. . . ."

The very next letter, written shortly afterward in a moment of despondency, talks of the possibility of "hurrying home to his grave!"

The last was no empty foreboding. He did indeed hasten back, and just reached Mount Vernon in time to die under his own roof, surrounded by his family and friends, and attended in his last moments by that brother on whose manly affection his heart seemed to repose. His death took place on the 26th July, 1752, when but thirty-four years of age. He was a noble-spirited, pure-minded, accomplished gentleman; honored by the public, and beloved by his friends. The paternal care ever manifested by him for his youthful brother, George, and the influence his own character and conduct must have had upon him in his ductile years, should link their memories together in history, and endear the name of Lawrence Washington to every American.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. 1, p. 96.

### The Home-coming

The *Sprightly Jane* was to make another voyage in March, and it was intended that George and his sister

should sail on her; but she was delayed below Mount Vernon for two weeks waiting for a wind. One morning late in March, George, on looking out of the window on rising to see if there were any chance of getting off that day, felt a strong wind from the northwest; but as soon as his eyes fell on the river he saw a frigate at anchor that had evidently come in during the night. And while watching her he saw the captain's gig shove off with two figures in it that wonderfully resembled his brother Lawrence and his faithful Peter. George jumped into his clothes, and ran down-stairs and to the shore to make certain, and there in the boat, half-supported by his servant, lay Lawrence, pale and ill beyond description, but with a happy light in his weary, suffering eyes. In a few minutes Mrs. Washington came flying down, and, with clasped hands and tears streaming down her cheeks, awaited her husband on the end of the little wharf. . . . This joyous welcome, the presence of faces dear and familiar, the sight of home, was almost too much happiness for the poor invalid. George literally carried Lawrence in his strong young arms up to the house, while his wife clung to his hand.

"I could not stay away any longer," said Lawrence, "and when the ship came to Bermuda, and the kind captain saw how hard it was for me to stay, to die among strangers, he invited me to return with him as his guest. I thought that you, Anne, and George might already have started for Bermuda, but, thanks to the good God, I find you here."

All those who loved Lawrence Washington saw that day that his end was near, and within three months, he gave up his life.

One gloomy September day, just a year from the time he had set forth with his brother on that dreary voyage, George realized that, at last, he was master of Mount Vernon, and the realization was one of the most painful moments of his life. He returned to the place at Belvoir, the home of his sister's father, where he had left her. In vain he had

pleaded with her to continue at Mount Vernon; for Lawrence in his will, had given it to her during her lifetime. But, gentle and submissive in all things else, Anne Washington could not and would not return to the home of her brief married happiness and the spot connected with the long series of crushing griefs that had befallen her.

*A Virginia Cavalier*, Molly Elliot Seawell, p. 271.

### **The Art of War and Manual of Arms**

From the sunshine and ease of this tropical winter Washington passed to a long season of trial and responsibility at home and abroad. In July, 1752, his much-loved brother Lawrence died, leaving George guardian of his daughter and heir to his estates in the event of that daughter's death. Thus the current of his home life changed, and responsibility came into it, while outside the mighty stream of public events changed too, and swept him along in the swelling torrent of a world-wide war.

In all the vast wilderness beyond the mountains there was not room for both French and English. The rival nations had been for years slowly approaching each other, until in 1749 each people proceeded at last to take possession of the Ohio country after its own fashion. The French sent a military expedition which sank and nailed up leaden plates; the English formed a great land company to speculate and make money, and both set diligently to work to form Indian alliances. A man of far less perception than Lawrence Washington, who had become the chief manager of the Ohio Company, would have seen that the conditions on the frontier rendered war inevitable, and he accordingly made ready for the future by preparing his brother for the career of a soldier, so far as it could be done.

At the same time Lawrence Washington procured for his brother, then only nineteen years of age, an appointment as one of the adjutants-general of Virginia with the rank

of major. To all this the young surveyor took kindly enough, so far as we can tell, but his military avocations were interrupted by his voyage to Barbadoes, by the illness and death of his brother, and by the cares and responsibilities thereby thrust upon him.

*George Washington*, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. I, p. 62.

### The Unmarried Master of Mount Vernon

Rich, intelligent, and his own master, Washington must have been an object of envy among the young men of his acquaintance. Impetuous and self-willed, and with veins full of rich red blood that had never been weakened by excess or poisoned by rum, the natural thing would have been for him to hurry over to London or Paris, stay there until he had toned himself down to the conventional "swell" level of inanition, and then return to explain in confidence that America was fit only to make money in. What he did, however, was to remain at home, mind his own business, and enjoy the life to which he was accustomed, and a more positive illustration of his unusual good sense is not on record. The attention that he received may have laid the foundation of that very good opinion which he is believed to have had of himself, and which subsequent experience gave him no occasion to abandon.

His position and character assured him as much social consideration as he could hope to receive anywhere, and as he was too healthy to crave artificial pleasures, he could be perfectly happy upon those the country afforded. As he was extremely handsome as well as rich and healthy, he must have been the champion "catch," and as the Virginia belles were as beautiful and refined then as now, he would have been an idiot to have sought ladies' society elsewhere. One's digestive apparatus aches to think of the innumerable dinners and teas that were set expressly for him by prudent mammas, and the shoemaker who constructed his dancing slippers must have been indeed a busy man. The glory of

his bachelor days lasted about two years—just long enough to convince a well-to-do young man that all maidens are mercenary, and to drive him, through spite, to throw himself away upon the homeliest and stupidest girl of his acquaintance. But suddenly Heaven, which looks out for its own, allowed the difficulty with the French and Indians, to come to a crisis, and England to become acquainted for the first time with George Washington as a soldier.

*George Washington, John Habberton, p. 12.*

## CHAPTER VI

### A DIFFICULT AND DANGEROUS MISSION

#### **The Youthful Envoy**

Like all Virginians, I was disturbed during this time by the news of the insolence of the French on the frontier, and began to feel that my brother's money, put into the Ohio Company, was in peril, for we were like to be cooped up by a line of forts, and our trade in peltries was already almost at an end, and about to pass into the hands of the French. We learned with pleasure that the royal governors were ordered to insist on the retirement of these overbusy French, who claimed all the land up to the Alleghanies, but I did not dream that I was soon to take part in the matter.

About that time, or before, there had been much effort to secure the Six Nations of Indians as allies. One of their chiefs, Tanacharisson, known as the Half-King, because of holding a subsidiary rule among the Indians, advised a fort to be built by us near to the Forks of the Ohio, on the east bank, and Gist, the trader set out on this errand. A Captain Trent was charged to carry our king's message to the French outposts; but having arrived at Logstown, one hundred and fifty miles from his destination and hearing of the defeat of our allies, the Miamis, by the French, he lost heart and came back to report. The Ohio Company at this time complained to the governor of the attacks on their traders, and this gentleman, being concerned both for his own pocket and for his Majesty's property, resolved to send some one of more spirit to bear the King's message ordering the French to retire and to cease to molest our fur traders about the Ohio.

It was unfortunate that Governor Dinwiddie, who was

now eager to defend his interests in the Ohio Company, had lost the prudent counsel of its late head, my brother Lawrence. He would have made a better envoy than I, for at the age of twenty-one a man is too young to influence the Indians, on account of a certain reverence they have for age in council. I was ignorant of what was intended when I received orders to repair to Williamsburg. To my surprise, and I may say to my pleasure, I learned that I was to go to Logstown. I was there to meet our allies, the Indians, and secure from them an escort and guides, and so push on and find the French commander. I was to deliver to him my summons, and wait an answer during one week, and then return. I was also to keep my eyes open as to all matters of military concern.

*The Youth of Washington, Told in the Form of an Autobiography, S. Weir Mitchell, M.D., p. 120.*

### Receiving His Instructions

George's appearance, always striking, was more so from the handsome mourning suit he still wore, although his brother had been dead more than a year. It showed off his blond beauty wonderfully well. His features had become more marked as he grew older, and although the face lacked the regular beauty of his father's who had been thought the handsomest man of his time, there was a piercing expression, an indescribable look of dignity and intelligence in George's countenance, which marked him in every company.

The governor, who was a fussy but well-meaning man, began as soon as the formal greetings were over: "Major Washington, I have work in hand for you. I am told by my Lord Fairfax and others that you are the fittest person in the colony for the work I have in hand. It requires the discretion of an old man, but it also requires the hardiness and strength of a young man, and you see, therefore, what a burden I lay upon you."



George's face turned quite pale at these words. "Sir," he stammered, "you ask more of me than I can do. I will give all my time and all my mind to my country; but I am afraid, sir—I am very much afraid—that you are putting me in a position I am not capable of filling."

"We must trust some one, Major Washington, and I sent not for you until I and my council had fully determined what to do. Here are your instructions. You will see that you are directed to set out with a suitable escort at once for the Ohio River, and convene all the chiefs you can at Logstown. You are to find out exactly how they stand toward us. You are then to take such a route as you think judicious to the nearest French post, deliver a letter from me, sealed with the great seal of the colony, to the French commandant, and demand an answer in the name of his Britannic majesty. You are to find out everything possible as to the number of the French forts, their armament, troops, commisariat, and where they are situated; and upon the information you bring will depend to a great degree whether there shall be war between England and France. When will you be ready to depart?"

"To-morrow morning, sir," answered George.

*A Virginia Cavalier*, Molly Elliot Seawell, p. 278.

### Governor Dinwiddie's Letter to the French Commandant

SIR, The Lands upon the River *Ohio*, in the Western Parts of the Colony of *Virginia*, are so notoriously known to be the Property of the Crown of *Great-Britain*; that it is a Matter of equal Concern and Surprise to me, to hear that a Body of *French* Forces are erecting Fortresses, and making Settlements upon that River, within his Majesty's Dominions.

The many and repeated Complaints I have received of these Acts of Hostility, lay me under the Necessity of sending, in the Name of the King my Master, the Bearer hereof, *George Washington*, Esq.; one of the Adjutants

General of the Forces of this Dominion, to complain to you of the Encroachments thus made, and of the Injuries done to the Subjects of *Great-Britain*, in open Violation of the Law of Nations, and the Treaties now subsisting between the two Crowns.

If these Facts are true, and you shall think fit to justify your Proceedings, I must desire you to acquaint me by whose Authority and Instructions you have lately marched from *Canada*, with an armed Force; and invaded the King of *Great-Britain's* Territories, in the Manner complained of? that according to the Purport and Resolution of your Answer, I may act agreeably to the Commission I am honoured with, from the King my Master.

However Sir, in Obedience to my Instructions, it becomes my Duty to require your peaceable Departure; and that you would forbear prosecuting a Purpose so interruptive of the Harmony and good Understanding, which his Majesty is desirous to continue and cultivate with the most Christian King.

I persuade myself that you will receive and entertain Major *Washington* with the Candour and Politeness natural to your Nation; and it will give me the greatest Satisfaction; if you return him with an Answer suitable to my Wishes for a long and lasting Peace between us. I have the Honour to subscribe myself,

SIR,

Your most obedient

Williamsburg, in Virginia,

Humble Servant,

October 31st, 1753.

ROBERT DINWIDDIE.

*Copy of his Honour the Governor's Letter to the Commandant of the French Forces on the Ohio, sent by Major Washington, appended to Washington's Journal, p. 41.*

### George, Van Braam and Gist Set out

The conditions of this expedition made it appear a journey of pleasure compared with those which he had undertaken in the lonely hardships of his survey work.





MAJOR GEORGE WASHINGTON

When George set forth this time, armed with proper credentials, accompanied by the faithful fencing-master Van Braam and by Christopher Gist, the king of living pioneers, with servants and arms and provisions, he looked back with something like respect to his own boyish self, traveling on foot, knapsack on back, through this very country, merely intent on learning his trade and making an honorable living. On his way to Wills' Creek, where Van Braam was to join him, he halted at the spot at the head of the Shenandoah Valley, where, three years before, he had sat in the moonlight, reading a packet of letters from home. His little hut was still standing on the grassy eminence above the stream. The woods where he had blazed paths and marked trees still kept the traces of his passage. They were once more in all their autumn glory, for it was October, and again the hunter's moon hung huge and golden in the sky, again the maples sent their flaming fleets circling down on the crystal eddies of the Shenandoah.

"Only three years," thought George, "and so much gone, so much that I never hoped for come! Then, I scarce dared think of what seemed forbidden ambitions, now the doors have opened of themselves. 'Twill be my own fault if they ever close again."

*In the Shadow of the Lord, Mrs. Hugh Fraser, p. 381.*

### Going on from Williamsburg

Washington set off from Williamsburg on the 30th of October [31st], the very day on which he received his credentials. At Fredericksburg he engaged his old "master of fence," Jacob Van Braam, to accompany him as interpreter; though it would appear from subsequent circumstances, that the veteran swordsman was but indifferently versed either in French or English.

Having provided himself at Alexandria with the necessities for the journey, he proceeded to Winchester, then on the frontier, where he procured horses, tents, and

other traveling equipments, and then pushed on by a road newly opened to Wills' Creek (town of Cumberland), where he arrived on the 14th of November.

Here he met Mr. Gist, the intrepid pioneer, who had explored the Ohio in the employ of the company, and whom he engaged to accompany and pilot him in the present expedition. He secured the services, also, of one John Davidson, as Indian interpreter, and of four frontiersmen, two of whom were Indian traders. With this little band, and his swordsman and interpreter, Jacob Van Braam, he set forth on the 15th of November, through a wild country, rendered almost impassable by recent storms of rain and snow.

At the mouth of Turtle Creek, on the Monongahela, he found John Frazier, the Indian trader, some of whose people . . . had been sent off prisoners to Canada. Frazier himself had recently been ejected by the French from the Indian village of Venango, where he had a gunsmith's establishment. According to his account the French general who had commanded on this frontier was dead, and the greater part of the forces were retired into winter quarters.

As the rivers were all so swollen that the horses had to swim them, Washington sent all the baggage down the Monongahela in a canoe under care of two of the men, who had orders to meet him at the confluence of that river with the Allegheny, where their united waters form the Ohio.

"As I got down before the canoe," writes he in his journal, "I spent some time in viewing the rivers, and the land at the Fork, which I think extremely well situated for a fort, as it has the absolute command of both rivers. The land at the point is twenty or twenty-five feet above the common surface of the water, and has a considerable bottom of flat, well-timbered land all around it, very convenient for building. The rivers are each a quarter of a mile or more across, and run here very nearly at right

angles; Allegheny bearing northeast, and Monongahela southeast. The former of these two is a very rapid and swift-running water, the other deep and still, without any perceptible fall." The Ohio Company had intended to build a fort about two miles from this place, on the southeast side of the river; but Washington gave the fork the decided preference. French engineers of experience proved the accuracy of his military eye, by subsequently choosing it for the site of Fort Duquesne, noted in frontier history.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. I, p. 105.

### **The Indian Council at Logstown**

In this neighborhood lived Shingiss, the king or chief sachem of the Delawares. Washington visited him at his village, to invite him to the council at Logstown. He was one of the greatest warriors of his tribe, and subsequently took up the hatchet at various times against the English, though now he seemed favorably disposed, and readily accepted the invitation.

They arrived at Logstown after sunset on the 24th of November. The Half-King was absent at his hunting lodge on Beaver Creek, about fifteen miles distant; but Washington sent out runners to invite him and all the other chiefs to a grand talk the following day.

In the morning four French deserters came into the village. They had deserted from a company of one hundred men, sent up from New Orleans with eight canoes laden with provisions. Washington drew from them an account of the French fort at New Orleans, and of the forts along the Mississippi, and at the mouth of the Wabash, by which they kept up a communication with the lakes; all which he carefully noted down. The deserters were on their way to Philadelphia, conducted by a Pennsylvania trader.

About three o'clock the Half-King arrived. Washington had a private conversation with him in his tent, through Davidson the interpreter. He found him intelligent,

patriotic and proudly tenacious of his territorial rights. We have already cited from Washington's papers the account given by this chief in this conversation, of his interview with the late French commander. He stated, moreover, that the French had built two forts, differing in size, but on the same model, a plan of which he gave, of his own drawing. The largest was on Lake Erie, the other on French Creek, fifteen miles apart, with a wagon road between them. The nearest and levellest way to them was now impassable, lying through large and miry savannahs; they would have, therefore, to go by Venango, and it would take five or six sleeps (or days) of good traveling to reach the nearest fort.

On the following morning at nine o'clock, the chiefs assembled at the council-house, where Washington, according to his instructions, informed them that he was sent by their brother, the Governor of Virginia, to deliver to the French commandant a letter of great importance, both to their brothers the English and to themselves; and that he was to ask their advice and assistance, and some of their young men to accompany and provide for him on the way, and be his safeguard against the "French Indians" who had taken up the hatchet. He concluded by presenting the indispensable document in Indian diplomacy, a string of wampum.

The chiefs, according to etiquette, sat for some moments silent after he had concluded, as if ruminating on what had been said, or to give him time for further remark.

The Half-King then rose and spoke on behalf of the tribes, assuring him that they considered the English and themselves brothers, and one people; and that they intended to return the French the "speech-belts," or wampums, which the latter had sent them. This, in Indian diplomacy, is a renunciation of all friendly relations. An escort would be furnished to Washington composed of Mingoes, Shannoahs, and Delawares, in token of the love and loyalty of



those several tribes; but three days would be required to prepare for the journey.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. I, p. 107.

### From Logstown to Venango

After a day or two more of delay and further consultations in the council-house, the chiefs determined that but three of their number should accompany the mission, as a greater number might awaken the suspicions of the French. Accordingly, on the 30th of November, Washington set out for the French post, having his usual party augmented by an Indian hunter, and being accompanied by the Half-King, an old Shannoah sachem named Jeskakake, and another chief, sometimes called Belt of Wampum, from being the keeper of the speech-belts, but generally bearing the sounding appellation of White Thunder.

Although the distance to Venango, by the route taken, was not above seventy miles, yet such was the inclemency of the weather and the difficulty of traveling, that Washington and his party did not arrive there until the 4th of December. The French colors were flying at a house whence John Frazier, the English trader, had been driven. Washington repaired thither, and inquired of three French officers whom he saw there where the commandant resided. One of them promptly replied that he had "the command of the Ohio." It was, in fact, the redoubtable Captain Joncaire, the veteran intriguer of the frontier. On being apprised, however, of the nature of Washington's errand, he informed him that there was a general officer at the next fort, where he advised him to apply for an answer to the letter of which he was the bearer.

In the meantime he invited Washington and his party to a supper at head-quarters. It proved a jovial one, for Joncaire appears to have been somewhat of a boon companion, and there is always ready, though rough, hospitality in the wilderness. It is true, Washington, for so young a

man, may not have had the most convivial air, but there may have been a moist look of promise in the old soldier Van Braam.

Joncaire and his brother officers pushed the bottle briskly. "The wine," says Washington, "as they dosed themselves pretty plentifully with it, soon banished the restraint which at first appeared in their conversation, and gave a license to their tongues to reveal their sentiments more freely. They told me that it was their absolute design to take possession of the Ohio, and by G— they would do it; for that although they were sensible that the English could raise two men for their one, yet they knew their motions were too slow and dilatory to prevent any undertaking. They pretend to have an undoubted right to the river from a discovery made by one La Salle sixty years ago, and the rise of this expedition is to prevent our settling on the river or the waters of it, as they heard of some families moving out in order thereto."

Washington retained his sobriety and composure throughout all the rodomontade and bacchanalian outbreak of the mercurial Frenchmen, leaving the task of pledging them to his master of fence, Van Braam, who was not a man to flinch from potations. He took careful note, however, of all their revelations, and collected a variety of information concerning the French forces; how and where they were distributed; the situations and distances of their forts, and their means and mode of obtaining supplies. If the veteran diplomatist of the wilderness had intended this revel for a snare, he was completely foiled by his youthful competitor.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. I, p. 111.

### Drink and Diplomacy

At the beginning of winter, and without an armed guard, Washington started on a longer, more difficult, and more dangerous trip than any one, not excepting a tramp,

could make in the far west to-day. A large portion of his route was innocent of roads, ferries, and inns; there were not even occasional settlers to invite a man to pass the night so as to have some one to talk to death. The young man's headquarters were in the saddle, and he was obliged to subsist in large part upon the country, which could give him only game and fish, and his guides were frequently Indians belonging to tribes that the French had prejudiced against the colonies. But a cool head, a good circulation, and a stiff upper lip enabled him to get through alive. Washington first struck the French at Venango, now within the limits of Pennsylvania. The post was in charge of a veteran named Joncaire, a jolly good fellow in whom diplomacy and whiskey were present in large quantities without interfering with one another. The arrival of a visitor, even if his errand might be supposed in advance to be of an unpleasant nature, was sufficient excuse for the uproarious evening for which Joncaire promptly prepared. There was a supper, with drink *ad libitum*, and in the course of the entertainment the Frenchman announced, with a big oath, that the country belonged to France, and France would keep it. Having thus prepared the young Virginian for what he might expect, Joncaire forwarded Washington, in the heartiest way in the world, to the Frenchman's superior officer who was at a fort on French Creek, near Lake Erie. Washington had supposed himself morally backed by an Indian Half-King who considered himself and his people aggrieved by the French, but Joncaire made the old fellow so drunk that he forgot to complain at the proper time, and when the dusky monarch's morning headache brought with it a desire to make good his short-comings, Joncaire kindly advised him to complain at the fort. Arrived at the fort, the young envoy was received by the commandant, the Chevalier Legardeur de St. Pierre, a venerable but shrewd old soldier and gentleman. As Legardeur regarded all men according to their quality, he treated Washington to

unlimited politeness and the Half-King to unlimited rum. After three days of discussion with Washington, who like a true American diplomatist, did not know a word of French, and of evasion of the Half-King except when a bottle stood between him and the declaration of his ultimatum, Legardeur gave Washington a sealed reply to Governor Dinwiddie's letter and the young envoy started for home, which destination he reached after a journey that was extremely uncomfortable and perilous.

Legardeur's answer, when opened, proved to be as modest, courteous, high-toned, and evasive as any that an old Frenchman ever penned. He would transmit Governor Dinwiddie's letter to his superior, the Marquis du Quesne, who was more competent than himself to determine what should be done about the disagreement as to territorial rights in the Ohio Valley. As for himself, he was simply a soldier under orders, and as he had not been instructed to regard any commands that might reach him from the Governor of Virginia, he was compelled to decline the intimation that he should retire.

*George Washington, John Habberton, p. 18.*

### A Week from Washington's Diary

[Dec.] 23d [1753] When I got Things ready to set-off, I sent for the Half-King, to know whether he intended to go with us, or by Water. He told me that *White-Thunder* had hurt himself much, and was sick and unable to walk; therefore he was obliged to carry him down in a Canoe. As I found he intended to stay here a Day or two, and knew that Monsieur *Joncaire* would employ every Scheme to set him against the *English* as he had before done; I told him I hoped he would guard against his Flattery, and let no fine Speeches influence him in their Favour. He desired I might not be concerned, for he knew the *French* too well, for any Thing to engage him in their Behalf. . . .

Our Horses were now so weak and feeble, and the

Baggage so heavy (as we were obliged to provide all the Necessaries which the Journey would require) that we doubted much their performing it; therefore myself and others (except the Drivers who were obliged to ride) gave up our Horses for Packs, to assist along with the Baggage. I put myself in an *Indian* walking Dress, and continued with them three Days, till I saw there was no Probability of their getting home in any reasonable Time. The Horses grew less able to travel every Day; the Cold increased very fast; and the Roads were becoming much worse by a deep Snow, continually freezing: Therefore as I was uneasy to get back, to make a Report of my Proceedings to his Honour the Governor, I determined to prosecute my Journey the nearest Way through the Woods, on Foot.

Accordingly I left Mr. *Vanbraam* in Charge of our Baggage; with Money and Directions, to provide Necessaries from Place to Place for themselves and Horses, and to make the most convenient Di(s)patch in Travelling.

I took my necessary Papers; pulled off my Cloaths; and tied myself up in a Match Coat. Then with Gun in Hand and Pack at my Back, in which were my Papers and Provisions, I set out with Mr. *Gist*, fitted in the same Manner on *Wednesday* the 26th. The Day following, just after we had passed a place called the *Murdering-Town* (where we intended to quit the Path, and steer across the Country for *Shannapins* Town) we fell in with a Party of *French* Indians, who had lain in Wait for us. One of them fired at Mr. *Gist* or me, not 15 Steps off, but fortunately missed. We took this Fellow into Custody, and kept him till 9 o'Clock at Night: Then let him go, and walked all the remaining Part of the Night without making any Stop; that we might get the Start, so far, as to be out of the Reach of their Pursuit the next Day, since we were well assured they would follow our Tract as soon as it was light. The next Day we continued travelling till quite dark, and got to the River about two Miles above *Shannapins*. We expected

to have found the River frozen, but it was not, only about 50 Yards from each Shore: The Ice I suppose had broken up above, for it was driving in vast Quantities.

There was no Way for getting over but on a Raft: Which we set about, with but one poor Hatchet, and finished just after Sun-setting. This was a whole Day's Work: we next got it launched, and went on Board of it: Then set-off. But before we were Half Way over, we were jammed in the Ice, in such a manner that we expected every Moment our Raft to sink, and ourselves to perish. I put-out my setting Pole to try to stop the Raft, that the Ice might pass by; when the Rapidity of the Stream threw it with so much Violence against the Pole, that it jirked me out into ten Feet Water: But I fortunately saved myself by catching hold of one of the Raft Logs. Notwithstanding all our efforts we could not get the Raft to either Shore; but were obliged, as we were near an Island, to quit our Raft and make to it.

The Cold was so extremely severe, that Mr. *Gist* had all his Fingers, and some of his Toes frozen; and the Water was shut up so hard, that we found no Difficulty in getting off the Island, on the Ice, in the Morning, and went to Mr. *Frazier's*. We met here with 20 Warriors who were going *Southward* to War: But coming to a place upon the Head of the great *Kunnaway*, where they found seven People killed and scalped (all but one Woman with very light Hair) they turned about and ran back for fear the Inhabitants should rise and take them as the Authors of the Murder.

As we intended to take Horses here, and it required some Time to find them, I went up about three Miles to the Mouth of *Yaughyaughgane* to visit Queen *Alliquippa*, who had expressed great Concern that we passed her in going to the Fort. I made her a present of a Matchcoat and a Bottle of Rum; which latter was thought much the best Present of the two.

*The Journal of Major George Washington, sent by the Hon. Robert Dinwiddie, Esq.; His Majesty's Lieutenant-Governor, and Commander in Chief of Virginia, to the Commandant of the French Forces on Ohio, pp. 35 to 39.*

### The French Commandant's Reply

SIR:—As I have the Honour of commanding here in Chief, Mr. *Washington* delivered me the letter which you wrote to the Commandant of the *French* Troops.

I should have been glad that you had given him Orders, or that he had been inclined to proceed to *Canada*, to see our General; to whom it better belongs than to me to set forth the Evidence and Reality of the Rights of the King, my Master, upon the Lands situated along the River *Ohio*, and to contest the Pretensions of the King of *Great-Britain* thereto.

I shall transmit your Letter to the Marquis *Du Quesne*. His Answer will be a Law to me; and if he shall order me to communicate it to you, Sir, you may be assured I shall not fail to dispatch it to you forthwith.

As to the Summons you send me to retire, I do not think myself obliged to obey it. Whatever may be your Instructions, I am here by Virtue of the Orders of my General; and I intreat you, Sir, not to doubt one Moment, but that I am determined to conform myself to them with all Exactness and Resolution which can be expected from the best Officer.

I do not know that in the Progress of this Campaign any Thing has passed which can be reputed an Act of Hostility, or that is contrary to the Treaties which subsist between the two Crowns; the Continuation whereof as much interests, and is as pleasing to us, as the *English*. Had you been pleased, Sir, to have descended to particularize the Facts which occasioned your Complaint, I should have had the Honour of answering you in the fullest, and, I am persuaded, most satisfactory Manner.

I made it my particular Care to receive Mr. *Washington*, with a Distinction suitable to your Dignity, as well as his own Quality and great Merit. I flatter myself that he will do me this Justice before you, Sir; and that he will

signify to you in the Manner I do myself, the profound Respect with which I am,

SIR,

Your most humble, and  
most obedient Servant,

LEGARDEUR DE ST. PIERRE.

From the Fort sur La Rivière au Bœuf,  
the 15th of December 1753.

*Translation of a Letter from M. Legardeur de St. Pierre, a Principal French Officer, in Answer to the Governor's Letter. Appended to Washington's Journal, p. 44.*

### A Man of Action and Real Silence

It is worth while to pause over this expedition a moment and to consider attentively this journal which recounts it, for there are very few incidents or documents which tell us more of Washington. He was not yet twenty-two when he faced this first grave responsibility, and he did his work absolutely well. Cool courage, of course, he showed, but also patience and wisdom in handling the Indians, a clear sense that the crafty and well-trained French men could not blind, and a strong faculty for dealing with men, always a rare and precious gift. As in the little Barbadoes diary so also in this journal, we see, and far more strongly, the penetration and perception that nothing could escape, and which set down all things essential and let the "huddling silver, little worth," go by. The clearness, terseness, and entire sufficiency of the narrative are obvious and lie on the surface; but we find also another quality of the man which is one of the most marked features in his character, and one which we must dwell upon again and again, as we follow the story of his life. Here it is that we learn directly for the first time that Washington was a profoundly silent man. The gospel of silence has been preached in these latter days by Carlyle, with the fervor of a seer and prophet, and the world owes him a debt for the historical discredit which he has brought upon the man of words as compared with the



man of deeds. Carlyle brushed Washington aside as "a bloodless Cromwell," a phrase to which we must revert later, on other grounds, and, as has already been said, failed utterly to see that he was the most supremely silent of the great men of action that the world can show. Like Cromwell and Frederick, Washington wrote countless letters, made many speeches, and was agreeable in conversation. But this was all in the way of business, and a man may be profoundly silent and yet talk a great deal. Silence in the fine and true sense is neither mere holding of the tongue nor an incapacity of expression. The greatly silent man is he who is not given to words for their own sake, and who never talks about himself. Both Cromwell, greatest of Englishmen, and the great Frederick, Carlyle's especial heroes, were fond of talking of themselves. So in still larger measure was Napoleon and many others of less importance. But Washington differs from them all. He had abundant power of words, and could use them with much force and point when he was so minded, but he never used them needlessly or to hide his meaning, and he never talked about himself. Hence the inestimable difficulty of knowing him. A brief sentence here and there, a rare gleam of light across the page of a letter, is all that we can find. The rest is silence. He did as great work as has fallen to the lot of man, he wrote volumes of correspondence, he talked with innumerable men and women, and of himself he said nothing. Here in this youthful journal we have a narrative of wild adventure, wily diplomacy, and personal peril, impossible of condensation, and yet not a word of the writer's thoughts or feelings. All that was done or said important to the business in hand was set down, and nothing was overlooked, but that is all. The work was done, and we know how it was done, but the man is silent as to all else. Here, indeed, is the man of action and of real silence, a character to be admired and wondered at in these or any other days.

### What Governor Dinwiddie Did

This reply caused quite a hubbub in Virginia, for it was received in midwinter, when neither planting, buying, nor selling could be done to any extent, and every one had plenty of time for consideration of any new topic. Governor Dinwiddie promptly ordered the recruiting of two companies, one of which, commanded by Captain Trent, who had been west before, was hurried off with instructions to complete a fort which the Ohio company had begun on the Ohio River: the other was to be raised by Washington, in and around Alexandria. But the Governor was suddenly hampered by the House of Burgesses, which he called into session that it might vote him money for the expenses of his movements. Instead of acting like a lot of dutiful time-servers, the Burgesses had the impudence to discuss the wisdom of the Governor's operations, and some of them were so unpatriotically logical as to read the Treaty of Utrecht just as it was written, and to doubt whether, under the terms of the said treaty, the King and the colonies had any rights whatever in the Ohio Valley. Countrymen who have time in which to think and brains enough to think with, always did play the mischief with politicians' plans, as Dinwiddie practically told the Burgesses when he accused them of a republican way of thinking. The most that the Governor could do was to obtain a grant of ten thousand pounds for the purpose of encouraging and protecting settlers in the Mississippi Valley: even this he could not spend without consultation with a committee appointed for the purpose. This committee, however, Dinwiddie wrapped around his finger so successfully, that he organized a regiment of six companies, each containing fifty men. Washington made a bad recruiting officer, probably because he could not tolerate the shiftless and disreputable fellows who were almost the only men who cared to go into the wilderness. His qualifications for the colonelcy, however,

were absolute. He knew the country, the nature, location, and strength of the enemy, the Indians and what was to be expected of them; he was honest, able, untiring, brave and prudent. He was destitute of conceit, but this quality is not absolutely essential to a colonel, although most new bearers of that rank are heavily charged with it. Dinwiddie offered Washington the command, and the young man declined it, being the first and last American who ever did such a thing. The colonelcy of the regiment was intrusted to an estimable English gentleman named Fry, Washington being second in rank. Colonel Fry, with commendable thoughtfulness and patriotism, proceeded to die before long, and the sole command of the regiment and the expedition devolved upon Washington.

*George Washington, John Habberton, p. 19.*

## CHAPTER VII

### THE OPENING OF HIS MILITARY CAREER

#### Beginning of the Journal of 1754

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of March I received from his Honor (Governor Dinwiddie) a Lieutenant Colonel's Commission of the *Virginia* Regiment, whereof *Joshua Fry*, Esq., was Colonel, dated the 15<sup>th</sup> with Orders to take the troops, which were at the time quartered at Alexandria, under my command and to march with them towards the Ohio, there to help Captain *Trent* to build Forts and to defend the possessions of his Majesty against the attempts and hostilities of the French.

April the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Every Thing being ready, we began our march according to our Orders, the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April with two Companies of Foot, commanded by Captain *Peter Hog* and Lieutenant *Jacob Van Braam*, five subalterns, two Sergeants, six Corporals, one Drummer, and one hundred and twenty Soldiers, one Surgeon, one *Swedish* Gentleman, who was a volunteer, two wagons guarded by one Lieutenant, Sergeant, Corporal and twenty-five Soldiers.

We left *Alexandria* on Tuesday Noon and pitched our tents about four miles from *Cameron* having marched six miles.

(From the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April to the 19<sup>th</sup> of said month this Journal only contains the march of the troops, and how they were joined by a detachment which was brought by Captain *Stevens*.)

April 19<sup>th</sup>. Met an Express who had letters from Captain *Trent* at the *Ohio*, demanding a reinforcement with all speed, as he hourly expected a body of eight hundred *French*. I tarried at *Job Pearsall's* for the arrival of the

troops when they came the next day. When I received the above Express, I dispatched a Courier to Colonel *Fry*, to give him notice of it.

April 20th Came down to Colonel *Cresap's* to order the Detachment, and on my Route, had notice that the Fort was taken by the French. That news was confirmed by Mr *Ward*, the Ensign of Captain *Trent*, who had been obliged to surrender to a Body of one thousand French and upwards, under the Command of Captain *Contrecoeur*, who was come from *Venango* Presque Isle with sixty bateaux, and three hundred canoes, and who having planted eighteen pieces of Cannon against the Fort, afterwards had sent him a Summons to withdraw. Mr *Ward* also informed me that the Indians kept steadfastly attached to our Interest. He brought two young *Indian* Men with him, who were *Mingoes*, that they might have the Satisfaction to see that we were marching with our troops to their succor.

*Journal of Colonel George Washington, 1754.* Edited, with Notes, by J. M. Toner, M.D., pp. 7 to 31.

### The Half-King's Speech and Belts

He [Ensign *Ward*] also delivered me the following speech which the *Half King* sent to me.

FORT ON OHIO, April 18, 1754.

A speech from the Half-King, Scrune-yattha, and belt of wampum, for the Governors of Virginia and Pennsylvania.

My Brethren the English. The Bearer will let you understand in what manner the *French* have treated us. We waited a long time, thinking they would come and attack us; we now see how they have a mind to use us.

We are now ready to fall upon them, waiting only for your succor. Have good courage, and come as soon as possible; you will find us as *ready to encounter with them as you are yourselves*.

We have sent those two young men to see if you are

ready to come, and if so they are to return to us to let us know where you are, that we may come and join you. We should be glad if the troops belonging to the two Provinces could meet together at the Fort which is in the way. If you do not come to our assistance now, we are entirely undone, and imagine we shall never meet again. I speak with a heart full of grief.

*A Belt of Wampum.*

The *Half-King* directed to me the following speech.

"I am ready, if you think it proper, to go to both the Governors, with these two young men, for I have now no more dependence on those who have been gone so long, without returning or sending any message."

*A Belt of Wampum.*

Speeches from *Memoir Contenant le Précis des Faits*, etc., translated and printed by Gaine, New York, 1757, p. 65.

### A Council of War

April 23<sup>rd</sup> A Council of War held at *Will's Creek* in order to consult upon what must be done on account of the news brought by *Mr Ward*.

The News brought by Ensign *Ward* having been examined into, as also the summons sent by Captain *Contrecoeur* Commander of the *French* troops and the speeches of the *Half-King*, and of the other chiefs of the *Six-Nations*; it appears, that Mr *Ward*, was forced to surrender the said Fort, the 17<sup>th</sup> of this instant to the *French*, who were above one thousand strong and had eighteen artillery pieces, some of which were nine pounders and also that the detachment of the *Virginia* regiment, amounting to one hundred and fifty men by Colonel *Washington* had orders to reinforce the Company of Captain *Trent*, and that the aforesaid Garrison consisted only of thirty-three effective men.

It was thought a thing impracticable to march towards the Fort without sufficient strength; however, being strongly invited by the *Indians*, and particularly by the speeches of the *Half-King*, the president put the question to vote whether we should not advance as far as *Red-Stone Creek* on *Monongahela*, about thirty-seven miles on this side of the fort, and there erect a fortification, clearing a road broad enough to pass with all our artillery and our baggage and there to wait for fresh Orders.

*Journal of Colonel George Washington, 1754.* Edited, with Notes, by J. M. Toner, M.D., pp. 39 to 42.

### Washington's Speech and Belt to the Half-King and the Reply

May 19th I despatched the young *Indian* who had returned [from Governor Dinwiddie] with Mr Ward, to the *Half-King*, with the following speech:

#### TO THE HALF-KING,

My Brethren,

It gives me great pleasure, to learn that you are marching to assist me with your counsels, be of good courage, my brethren, and march vigorously towards your brethren the *English*; for fresh forces will soon join them, who will protect you against your treacherous enemy the *French*. I must send my friends to you, that they may acquaint you with an agreeable speech which the Governor of *Virginia* has sent to you. He is very sorry for the bad usage you have received. The swollen streams do not permit us to come to you quickly, for that reason I have sent this young man to invite you to come and meet us: he can tell you many things that he has seen in *Virginia*, and also how well he was received by the most prominent men, they did not treat him as the *French* do your people who go to their Fort; they refuse them provisions; this man has had given him all that his heart could wish; for the confirmation of this, I here give you a Belt of *Wampum*.

May 24<sup>th</sup> This morning an *Indian* arrived in company with the one whom I had sent to the *Half-King* and brought me the following letter from him.

To any of his Majesty's officers whom this May Concern.

As 'tis reported that the French army is set out to meet M. George Washington, I exhort you my brethren, to guard against them, for they intend to fall on the first *English* they meet. They have been on their march these two days, the Half King and the other chiefs will join you within five days, to hold a council, though we know not the number we shall be. I shall say no more; but remember me to my brethren the English.

[Signed] THE HALF-KING.

*Journal of Colonel George Washington, 1754.* Edited, with Notes, by J. M. Toner, M.D.  
pp. 66 to 71.

### Captain Trent Loses the Strategic Point

Like the good conservative that he was, Washington respected precedents established by new commanders. As soon as he was fairly on the road, he wrote back for more men and artillery; soon after this the contrast between soft anticipation and hard reality caused him to become discouraged and to write letters expressing his feelings. . .

Captain Trent, who had gone on in advance to complete the fort (at the junction of the Allegheny and Monongahela, where Pittsburgh now stands), had found some excuse for being many miles in the rear, leaving fifty men at work under an ensign, when one day a thousand Frenchmen indulged in a canoe cruise down the Allegheny River, liked what there was of the fort, and gave the Virginians their choice between marching out and being driven out. The ensign in command judiciously accepted the pleasanter method, for defense was impossible, and started eastward after enjoying a good supper which Commander Contrecoeur, like a jolly good Frenchman, tendered him.

Washington did not, in his letters, confess to any



unusual outbreak of profanity on learning of this disarrangement of his plans; but it must be remembered that even at that early period of his life he was not given to telling everything he knew; besides, being a prudent man, he may not have sworn at all, for it is to be doubted whether his stock of expletives would have been equal to the occasion. One thing is certain, he did not make the failure of Trent's party an excuse for falling back to a civilized country and abusing the Government; on the contrary, he obeyed the conclusions of a council of war and started for the mouth of Red Stone Creek, on the Monongahela, down which river he might drop and give the French tit for tat at Trent's fort, which was now being enlarged and completed under the name of Fort Duquesne. With characteristic American assurance, which often is greatest in the most modest natures, he wrote in his own name, for aid, to the Governors of Pennsylvania and Maryland, although those officials, like most others in the colonies, had paid no attention to a similar appeal by the Virginian governor.

*George Washington, John Habberton, p. 24.*

### **"I Would Prefer the Toil of a Daily Laborer"**

With all this inertia and stupidity Washington was called to cope, and he rebelled against it in a vigorous fashion. Leaving Colonel Fry to follow with the main body of troops, Washington set out on April 2, 1754, with two companies from Alexandria, where he had been recruiting amidst most irritating difficulties. He reached Wills' Creek three weeks later; and then his real troubles began. Captain Trent, the timid and halting envoy, who had failed to reach the French, had been sent out by the wise authorities to build a fort at the junction of the Allegheny and Monongahela, on the admirable site selected by the keen eye of Washington. There Trent left his men and returned to Wills' Creek, where Washington found him, but without the pack-horses that he had promised to provide. Presently

news came that the French in overwhelming numbers had swept down upon Trent's little party, captured their fort, and sent them packing back to Virginia. Washington took this to be war, and determined at once to march against the enemy. Having impressed from the inhabitants, who were not bubbling over with patriotism, some horses and wagons, he set out on his toilsome march across the mountains.

It was a wild and desolate region, and progress was extremely slow. By May 9th he was at the Little Meadows, twenty miles from his starting-place; by the 18th at the Youghiogany River, which he explored and found unnavigable. He was therefore forced to take up his weary march again for the Monongahela, and by the 27th he was at the Great Meadows, a few miles further on. The extreme danger of his position does not seem to have occurred to him, but he was harassed and angered by the conduct of the assembly. He wrote to Governor Dinwiddie that he had no idea of giving up his commission. "But," he continued, "let me serve voluntarily; then I will, with the greatest pleasure in life, devote my services to the expedition, without any other reward than the satisfaction of serving my country; but to be slaving dangerously for the shadow of pay, through woods, rocks, mountains,—I would rather prefer the great toil of a daily laborer, and dig for a maintenance, provided I were reduced to the necessity, than serve upon such ignoble terms; for I really do not see why the lives of His Majesty's subjects in Virginia should be of less value than those in other parts of his American dominions, especially when it is well known that we must undergo double their hardship." Here we have a high-spirited, high-tempered young gentleman, with a contempt for shams that it is pleasant to see, and evidently endowed also with a fine taste for fighting and not too much patience.

### The March to Great Meadows

In the week that succeeded the departure from Alexandria, Major Satterthwaite watched the young commander with interest and approval which rapidly grew into respect. Harassed by every care that can beset the leader of lazy, unwilling recruits, ill armed and ill provisioned, on an expedition over difficult country, disappointed of promised reinforcements of men, horses, and wagons, George was everywhere at once, kept his temper and, what was more difficult, kept his men, for these were openly grumbling at their hardships and privations, and, while marching on under his compelling authority, cast as it were an eye over their shoulders to mark a safe method of escape from his inconvenient vigilance, back to their homes. He had a moment of furious anger when, at Wills' Creek, he learned that the fort he had asked the government to build, on the important point of the junction of the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers, had been appropriated by the French, during the unauthorized absence of its commander, who, apparently weary of his duties, had left it for a jaunt to Wills' Creek. The insult and the necessity of resenting it precipitated matters. George felt that he must act at once. He and his little force set out to find the French, without waiting for the reinforcements, of whose approach there was no sign. Day after day George marched on, the Major at his side, seeking for the enemy and praying inwardly that he might be met in some spot fairly fit for the encounter. Nearly a month passed before he took up his position at Great Meadows, hoping to draw the French to fight him on his own ground. They hovered near, scouting parties would appear and vanish again; then friendly Indians brought news of a great army on the march towards the place.

"This looks bad," said the Major. "It seems to me, George, that the heart may fail to be recovered this time. We are too few to have a chance in open fight."

"There is always a chance—where 'tis English against French," replied the young man coolly; "but I have made up my mind to add another in my favour. I will surprise them if I can. We have good scouts among our Indians."

*In the Shadow of the Lord, Mrs. Hugh Fraser, p. 412.*

### His First Victory

With increasing caution they finally approached a hollow in the hills whence a light spiral of smoke was rising. The French were but careless adversaries after all. They had evidently passed over the very ridge where the attacking party now halted to rest for a few minutes. Branches had been hacked away, and a few saplings felled to clear a road. A boot, split down the back, had been tossed into the grass close to them.

"Now, then," said George, "are you ready? The fellows are but a few hundred yards off." Indeed, sounds of talk and a fragment of song met their ears as he ceased speaking.

"Le beau passeur du gué, la la!  
Le beau passeur du gué."

It came quavering along, followed by a burst of laughter. The next sound was a cry, for the Americans were on the negligently guarded camp, and in an instant the hills rang to the cracking of the shots. An officer rolled over on his face among the ashes of the fire, a man fell here, another there; the fighting was desperate for an instant—in the next it had ceased. Jumonville, the officer in command, lay dead at George's feet, half a score of men had fallen motionless in the grass; the rest surrendered. There had been under forty in all, and but one got away to tell the tale.

George stood silent for a moment, all elation gone. It had been so small, so easy, and the little bit of fighting seemed scarce an excuse for the death of an officer and ten good men. He had never killed before, and he liked it not.





WASHINGTON'S FIRST ENCOUNTER, NEAR GREAT MEADOWS

All remembrance of what they would have done to him was gone for the moment, and he stood, staring down at Jumonville's corpse, with a strange sense of dissatisfaction. Van Braam took him by the arm.

"We must search this," he said, pointing to the dead captain. "There may be a dozen of his fellows out on the like quest. Belike he carries papers." He did, papers which fully justified . . . Colonel Washington's attack. George, recalled to his judgment at sight of these, was glad of what he had done. Jumonville and his comrades were buried as decently as the circumstances permitted, and the prisoners were marched back to the camp at Great Meadows. George wrote with some youthful elation about this, his first encounter. When the news had had time to travel, Colonel Washington was called a great man in Virginia, a bombastic hero in London, and a villainous murdering ruffian in France. He had won his first victory.

*In the Shadow of the Lord, Mrs. Hugh Fraser, p. 414.*

### Washington's Account of the Attack near Great Meadows and His Defense of It

May 27<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Gist arrived early in the morning, who told us that Mr. *la Force*, with fifty men whose tracks he had seen five miles from here, had been at his plantation the day before, towards noon, and would have killed a cow, and broken everything in the house, if two *Indians*, whom he had left in charge of the house, had not prevented them from carrying out their design. I immediately detached 65 men under the command of Captain *Hog*, Lieutenant *Mercer*, Ensign *La Peronie*, three Sergeants and three corporals, with instructions. The *French* had made many inquiries at Mr. *Gist's*, as to what had become of the Half-King? I did not fail to let several young *Indians* who were in our Camp know that the French wanted to kill the Half-King; and it had its desired effect. They immediately

offered to accompany our people to go after the *French*, and if they found it true that he had been killed, or even insulted by them, one of them would presently carry the news thereof to the *Mingo* village, in order to incite their warriors to fall upon them. One of these young men was detached towards Mr. *Gist's*, and in case he should not find the *Half-King* there, he was to send a message by a *Delaware*.

About eight in the evening I received an express from the *Half-King* who informed me that, as he was coming to join us, he had seen along the road, the tracks of two men, which he had followed, till he was brought thereby to a low obscure place; that he was of opinion the whole party of the *French* was hidden there. That very moment I sent out forty men and ordered my ammunition to be put in a place of safety, fearing it to be a stratagem of the *French* to attack our camp. I left a guard to defend it, and with the rest of my men, set out in a heavy rain, and in a night as dark as pitch, along a path scarce broad enough for one man; we were sometimes fifteen or twenty minutes out of the path before we could come to it again, and we would often strike against each other in the darkness: All night along we continued our route, and on the 28<sup>th</sup> about sunrise we arrived at the *Indian* camp, where after having held a council with the *Half-King*, we concluded to attack them together; so we sent out two men to discover where they were, as also their posture and what sort of ground was thereabout, after which we prepared to surround them marching one after the other, *Indian* fashion. We had thus advanced pretty near to them when they discovered us; I then ordered my company to fire; my fire was supported by that of Mr. Waggoner and my company and his received the whole fire of the *French*, during the greater part of the action, which only lasted a quarter of an hour before the enemy was routed.

We killed Mr. de Jumonville, the Commander of that party, as also nine others; we wounded one and made



twenty-one prisoners, among whom were *M. la Force*, *M. Drouillon* and two cadets. The Indians scalped the dead and took away the greater part of their arms, after which we marched on with the prisoners under guard to the *Indian* camp, where I again held a council with the *Half-King*, and there informed him that the Governor was desirous to see him, and was expecting him at *Winchester*; he answered that he could not go just then, as his people were in too imminent danger from the *French* whom they had attacked; that he must send runners to all the allied nations, in order to invite them to take up the Hatchet.

After this I marched on with the prisoners. They informed me that they had been sent with a summons to order me to retire. A plausible pretence to discover our camp and to obtain knowledge of our forces and our situation! It was so clear that they were come to reconnoitre what we were, that I admired their assurance when they told me they were come as an Embassy; their instructions were to get what knowledge they could of the roads, rivers, and all the country as far as the Potomac; and instead of coming as an Ambassador, publicly and in an open manner, they came secretly, and sought the most hidden retreats more suitable for deserters than for Embassadors; they encamped there and remained hidden for whole days together, at a distance of not more than five miles from us; they sent spies to reconnoiter our camp; the whole body turned back 2 miles; they sent the two messengers mentioned in the instruction, to inform *M. de Contrecoeur* of the place where we were, and of our disposition, that he might send his detachments to enforce the summons as soon as it should be given.

Besides, an Ambassador has princely attendants, whereas this was only a simple petty *French* officer, an Ambassador has no need of spies, his person being always sacred: and seeing their intention was so good, why did they tarry two days at five miles' distance from us without

acquainting me with the summons, or at least, with something that related to the Embassy? That alone would be sufficient to excite the strongest suspicions, and we must do them the justice to say, that, if they wanted to hide themselves, they could not have picked out better places than they had done. The summons was so insolent, and savoured of so much Gasconade, that if it had been brought openly by two men it would have been an excessive Indulgence to have suffered them to return.

It was the Opinion of the *Half-King* in this case that their pretensions were evil and that it was pure pretence; that they had never intended to come to us otherwise than as enemies, and if we had been such fools as to let them go they would never have helped us to take any other Frenchmen.

They say they called to us as soon as they had discovered us; which is an absolute falsehood, for I was then marching at the head of the company going towards them, and can positively affirm, that, when they first saw us, they ran to their arms, without calling, as I must have heard them had they so done.

*Journal of Colonel George Washington, 1754.* Edited, with Notes, by J. M. Toner, M.D., pp. 77 to 99, from *Memoir Contenant le Précis des Faits*, translated and printed by Gaine, New York, 1757.

### "That I Know to be False!"

The prisoners were accordingly conducted to the camp at the Great Meadows, and sent on the following day (29th), under a strong escort to Governor Dinwiddie, then at Winchester. Washington had treated them with great courtesy; had furnished Drouillon and La Force with clothing from his own scanty stock, and, at their request, given them letters to the governor, bespeaking for them the "respect and favor due to their character and personal merit."

A sense of duty, however, obliged him, in his general despatch, to put the governor on his guard against La Force. "I really think, if released, he would do more to

our disservice than fifty other men, as he is a person whose active spirit leads him into all parties, and has brought him acquainted with all parts of the country. Add to this a perfect knowledge of the Indian tongues, and a great influence with the Indians."

After the departure of the prisoners, he wrote again respecting them: "I have still stronger presumption, indeed almost confirmation, that they were sent as spies, and were ordered to wait near us till they were fully informed of our intentions, situation, and strength, and were to have acquainted their commander therewith, and to have been lurking here for re-enforcements before they served the summons, if served at all.

"I doubt not but they will endeavor to amuse you with many smooth stories, as they did me; but they were confuted in them all, and, by circumstances too plain to be denied, almost made ashamed of their assertions.

"I have heard since they went away, they should say they called on us not to fire; but that I know to be false, for I was the first man that approached them, and the first whom they saw, and immediately they ran to their arms, and fired briskly till they were defeated." . . . "I fancy they will have the assurance of asking the privilege due to an embassy, when in strict justice they ought to be hanged as spies of the worst sort."

*Life of George Washington, Washington Irving, Vol. 1, p. 154.*

### A Prologue of the Revolutionary Drama

Indignant letters written in vigorous language were, however, of little avail, and Washington prepared to shift for himself as best he might. His Indian allies brought him news that the French were on the march, and had thrown out scouting parties. Picking out a place in the Great Meadows for a fort, "a charming field for an encounter," he in his turn sent out a scouting party, and then on fresh intelligence from the Indians set forth himself with

forty men to find the enemy. After a toilsome march they discovered their foes in camp. The French, surprised and surrounded, sprang to arms, the Virginians fired, there was a sharp exchange of shots, and all was over. Ten of the French were killed and twenty-one were taken prisoners, only one of the party escaping to carry back the news.

This little skirmish made a prodigious noise in its day, and was much heralded in France. The French declared that Jumonville, the leader, who fell at the first fire, was foully assassinated, and that he and his party were ambassadors and sacred characters. Paris rang with this fresh instance of British perfidy, and a Mr. Thomas celebrated the luckless Jumonville in an epic poem in four books. French historians, relying on the account of the Canadian who escaped, adopted the same tone, and at a later day mourned over this black spot on Washington's character. The French view was simple nonsense. Jumonville and his party, as the papers found on Jumonville showed, were out on a spying and scouting expedition. They were seeking to surprise the English when the English surprised them, with the usual backwoods result. The affair has a dramatic interest because it was the first blood shed in a great struggle, and was the beginning of a series of world-wide wars and social and political convulsions, which terminated more than half a century later on the plains of Waterloo. It gave immortality to an obscure French officer by linking his name with that of his opponent, and brought Washington for the moment before the eyes of the world, which little dreamed that this Virginian colonel was destined to be one of the principal figures in the great revolutionary drama to which the war then beginning was but the prologue.

*George Washington, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. I, p. 71.*

### **"Snatching Victory from the Jaws of Defeat "**

Gossipy old Horace Walpole told King George II that Washington had said that "the whistling of bullets was like

music," and the king replied, "If that young man had heard more bullets he would not have thought so." Later in life, after this story was widely printed, Washington was asked if he had ever said such a thing, and he replied:

"If I did so, it must have been when I was very young."

Colonel Fry, the old officer the governor had put in command of all the Virginia forces, died at Wills Creek, and Colonel James Innes of North Carolina, was reported to be his successor. Major Washington was pleased, for Innes had three hundred and fifty men under him. Innes's rank had been created by the crown while Washington's appointment was from the governor only. On this account Innes and his men, though they marched to the seat of action, refused to aid in fortifying and preparing to resist the French, who were reported to be coming in large numbers to attack them. The North Carolina troops would have nothing to do with the Virginians—save to stand by, jeering the few men who were working sturdily upon the roads and defenses. But for this arrogant obstinacy the results of those early battles might have been very different. Governor Dinwiddie himself, in his efforts to favor Colonel Innes, was largely to blame for this outrageous state of affairs. Two independent New York companies arrived at Wills Creek in time to have been sent on to save the day at Fort Necessity—so named because of the desperate straits of Washington's hungry command. The separate provinces were so unwilling to co-operate that they sent companies under commanders who would acknowledge no other authority. These "independent" companies, too independent to fight, idly looked on while the heroic little force of Virginians under Washington starved and struggled and fought on in sheer desperation.

The French had finished the fort at the fork of the Ohio and named it Fort Duquesne, in honor of the Canadian general, and Captain de Villiers, a brother-in-law of Jumonville, marched down to the little palisaded structure with

nearly a thousand French and Indians. Even the Half-King and other Indian allies of the English deserted them. It was only a question of time. The few men at Fort Necessity had no provisions and little ammunition. Yet Washington stipulated terms which allowed him to march away, July 4, 1754, with drums beating and colors flying. The young Virginia major was so brave as to be foolhardy. The Indian Half-King, to excuse himself for deserting, afterwards said of the contending white forces, "The French were cowards, and the English, fools."

*The Washington Story-Calendar, Wayne Whipple, June 19 to 25, 1910.*

### **The Articles of Capitulation**

*(Translated from the French).*

ARTICLE 1<sup>st</sup>.—We permit the English Commander to withdraw all the garrison, in order that he may return peaceably to his country, and to shield him from all insult at the hands of our French, and to restrain as much as may be in our power, the savages who are with us.

ART. 2<sup>nd</sup>.—He shall be permitted to go out and take with him whatever belongs to his troops, except the artillery, which we reserve for ourselves.

ART. 3<sup>d</sup>.—We accord them the honors of war; they shall go out with beating drums, and with a small piece of cannon, wishing by this means to prove that we treat them as friends.

ART. 4<sup>th</sup>.—As soon as these articles shall be signed by both parties, they shall pull down the English flag.

ART. 5<sup>th</sup>.—To-morrow at daybreak a French detachment shall lead forth the garrison and take possession of the aforesaid fort.

ART. 6<sup>th</sup>.—Since the English have scarcely any horses or oxen left, they shall be allowed to place their property

*en cache*, in order that they may return to seek for it after they shall have recovered their horses; for this purpose they shall be permitted to leave such number of troops as guards as they may think proper, under this condition that they give their word of honor that they will work on no establishment either in this place or from here to the summit of the mountains for one year reckoning from this day.

ART. 7<sup>th</sup>.—Since the English have in their power an officer and two cadets, and in general, all the prisoners whom they took *when they murdered Lord* [*dans l'assassinat du Sieur de*] *Fumonville*, they now promise to send them with an escort to Fort Duquesne, situated on the Beautiful River [*la Belle-Rivière*, that is, the Ohio,] and to secure the safe performance of this article, as well as of this treaty, Messrs. Jacob Van Braam and Robert Stobo, both captains, shall be delivered to us as hostages until the arrival of our French and Canadians above mentioned.

We on our part declare that we shall give an escort to send back in safety the two officers who promise us our French in two months and a half at the latest.

Copied on one of the posts of our block-house the same day and year as before.

(Signed) Messrs. JAMES MACKAYE, G<sup>c</sup>.

G<sup>c</sup>. WASHINGTON,

COULON VILLIER.

*Journal of Colonel George Washington, 1754.* Edited, with Notes, by J. M. Toner, M.D. Appendix, p. 156. (Translation corrected by W. W. from original French sources.)

### End of His First Campaign

So ended Washington's first campaign. His friend the Half-King, the celebrated Seneca chief, Thanacarishon, who prudently departed on the arrival of the French, has left us a candid opinion of Washington and his opponents. "The colonel," he said, "was a good-natured man, but had

no experience; he took upon him to command the Indians as slaves, and would have them every day upon scout and to attack the enemy by themselves, but would by no means take advice from the Indians. He lay in one place from one full moon to the other, without making any fortifications, except that little thing on the meadow; whereas, had he taken advice, and built such fortifications as I advised him, he might easily have beat off the French. But the French in the engagement acted like cowards, and the English like fools."

There is a deal of truth in this opinion. The whole expedition was rash in the extreme. When Washington left Wills's Creek he was aware that he was going to meet a force of a thousand men with only a hundred and fifty raw recruits at his back. In the same spirit he pushed on; and after the Jumonville affair, although he knew that the wilderness about him was swarming with enemies, he still struggled forward. When forced to retreat he made a stand at the Meadows and offered battle in the open to his more numerous and more prudent foes, for he was one of those men who by nature regard courage as a substitute for everything, and who have contempt for hostile odds. He was ready to meet any number of French and Indians with cheerful confidence and real pleasure. He wrote in a letter which soon became famous, that he loved to hear bullets whistle, a sage observance which he set down in later years as a folly of youth. Yet this boyish outburst, foolish as it was, has a meaning for us, for it was essentially true. Washington had the fierce fighting temper of the Northmen. He loved battle and danger, and he never ceased to love them and to give way to their excitement, although he did not again set down such sentiments in boastful phrase that made the world laugh. Men of such temper, moreover, are naturally imperious and have a fine disregard of consequences, with the result that their allies, Indian or otherwise, often become impatient and finally useless. The campaign



was perfectly wild from the outset, and if it had not been for the utter indifference to danger displayed by Washington, and the consequent timidity of the French, that particular body of Virginians would have been permanently lost to the British Empire.

*George Washington*, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. I, p. 74.

### “The Same Identical Gent”

When returned from his first campaign, and resting at Mount Vernon, the time seems to have been beguiled by some charmer, for one of Washington's officers and intimates writes from Williamsburg, “I imagine you By this time plung'd in the midst of delight heaven can afford & enchanted By Charmes even Stranger to the Ciprian Dame,” and a foot-note by the same hand only excites further curiosity concerning this latter personage by indefinitely naming her as “Mrs. Neil.”

With whatever heart-affairs the winter was passed, with the spring the young man's fancy turned not to love, but again to war. . . . No longer did he have to sue for the favor of the fair ones, and Fairfax wrote him that “if a Satterday Nights Rest cannot be sufficient to enable your coming hither tomorrow, the Lady's will try to get Horses to equip our Chair or attempt their strength on Foot to Salute you, so desirous are they with loving Speed to have an ocular Demonstration of your being the same Identical Gent—that lately departed to defend his Country's Cause.” Furthermore, to this letter was appended the following:

“*Dear Sir:*—After thanking Heaven for your safe return I must accuse you of great unkindness in refusing us the pleasure of seeing you this night. I do assure you nothing but our being satisfied that our company would be disagreeable should prevent us from trying if our Legs would not carry us to Mount Vernon this night, but if you

will not come to us tomorrow morning very early we shall be at Mount Vernon.

"S[ally] Fairfax.

"Ann Spearing.

"Eliz'th Dent."

Nor is this the only feminine postscript of this time, for in the postscript of a letter from Archibald Cary, a leading Virginian, he is told that "Mrs. Cary & Miss Randolph joyn in wishing you that sort of Glory which will most In-dear you to the Fair Sex."

*The True George Washington*, Paul Leicester Ford, p. 89.

### "The Season Calls for Despatch"

In the meantime the French, elated by their recent triumph, and thinking no danger at hand, relaxed their vigilance at Fort Duquesne. Stobo, who was a kind of prisoner at large there, found means to send a letter secretly by an Indian, dated July 28, and directed to the commander of the English troops. It was accompanied by a **plan** of the fort. "There are two hundred men here," writes he, "and two hundred expected; the rest have gone off in detachments to the amount of one thousand, besides Indians. None lodge in the fort but Contrecoeur and the guard, consisting of forty men and five officers; the rest lodge in bark cabins around the fort. The Indians have access day and night, and come and go when they please. If one hundred trusty Shawnees, Mingoës, and Delawares were picked out, they might surprise the fort, lodging themselves under the palisades by day, and at night secure the guard with their tomahawks, shut the sally-gate, and the fort is ours."

One part of Stobo's letter breathes a loyal and generous spirit of self-devotion. Alluding to the danger in which he and Van Braam, his fellow-hostage, might be involved, he says, "Consider the good of the expedition without

regard to us. When we engaged to serve the country it was expected we were to do it with our lives. For my part, I would die a hundred deaths to have the pleasure of possessing this fort but one day. They are so vain of their success at the Meadows [Fort Necessity] it is worse than death to hear them. Haste to strike."

The Indian messenger carried the letter to Aughquick and delivered it into the hands of George Croghan. The Indian chiefs who were with him insisted upon his opening it. He did so, but on finding the tenor of it, transmitted it to the Governor of Pennsylvania. The secret information communicated by Stobo, may have been the cause of a project suddenly conceived by Governor Dinwiddie, of a detachment which, by a forced march across the mountains, might descend upon the French and take Fort Duquesne at a single blow; or failing that, might build a rival fort in its vicinity. He accordingly wrote Washington to march forthwith for Wills's Creek, with such companies as were complete, leaving orders for the officers to follow as soon as they should have enlisted men sufficient to make up their companies. "The season of the year," added he, "calls for despatch. I depend upon your usual diligence and spirit to encourage your people to be active on this occasion."

*Life of George Washington, Washington Irving, Vol. 1, p. 177.*

### The First Blow of the Seven Years' War

Mr. Washington was at this time raising such a regiment as with the scanty pay and patronage of the Virginian government, he could get together, and proposed with the help of these men-of-war, to put a more peremptory veto upon the French invaders than the solitary ambassador had been enabled to lay. A small force under another officer, Colonel Trent, had been already despatched to the west, with orders to fortify themselves so as to be able to resist any attack of the enemy. The French troops, greatly

outnumbering ours, came up with the English outposts, who were fortifying themselves at a place on the confines of Pennsylvania where the great city of Pittsburg now stands. A Virginian officer with but forty men was in no condition to resist twenty times that number of Canadians, who appeared before his incomplete works. He was suffered to draw back without molestation; and the French, taking possession of his fort, strengthened it and christened it by the name of the Canadian governor, Duquesne. Up to this time no actual blow of war had been struck. The troops representing the hostile nations were in presence—the guns were loaded, but no one as yet had cried, "Fire!" It was strange that in a savage forest of Pennsylvania, a young Virginian officer should fire a shot and waken up a war which was to last for sixty years, which was to cover his own country and pass into Europe, to cost France her American colonies, to sever ours from us, and create the great Western Republic; to rage over the Old World when extinguished in the New; and, of all the myriads engaged in the vast contest, to leave the prize of the greatest fame with him who struck the first blow!

*The Virginians*, W. M. Thackeray, Vol. I, p. 57.

### **"All is Fair in—War"**

When trying to win the Indians to the English cause in 1754, Washington in his journal states that he "let the young Indians who were in our camp know that the French wanted to kill the Half King," a diplomatic statement he hardly believed, which the writer says "had its desired effect," and which the French editor declared to be an "imposture." In this same campaign he was forced to sign a capitulation which acknowledged that he had been guilty of assassination, and this raised such a storm in Virginia when it became known that Washington hastened to deny all knowledge of the charge having been contained among the articles, and alleged that it had not been made

clear to him when the paper had been translated and read. On the contrary, another officer present at the reading states that he refused to "sign the Capitulation because they charged us with Assassination in it."

In writing to an Indian agent in 1775, Washington was "greatly enraptured" at hearing of his approach, dwelt upon the man's "hearty attachment to our glorious Cause" and his "Courage of which I have had very great proofs." Inclosing a copy of the letter to the governor, Washington said, "the letter savors a little of flattery &c., &c., but this, I hope is justifiable on such an occasion."

*The True George Washington*, Paul Leicester Ford, p. 307.

### The Only Course Possible

The government took a generous view of Mr. Washington's case, and, to his amazement, addressed to him a vote of thanks, of praise for his hard work and masterly retreat, as they were pleased to call it. . . .

But the authorities did not long remain in this reasonable mood. They were enabled to increase the army by a new vote of supplies, and chose this moment to settle, once for all, the vexed question of precedence between regular and colonial troops; the former comprised those who held the King's commission, the latter, those raised and supported by each State for its own defence. The new arrangement was one of such superlative foolishness that it appeared to have been conceived with the object of nullifying all military action. It provided no commanders, generals, or colonels, but gave each company to its independent captain to use as he saw fit. The promulgation was evidently inspired by one made at this moment by George the Second, to the effect that any officer holding a royal commission should outrank any provincial officer of any grade whatever, and that even the highest of the latter, such as generals, should practically cease to be officers at all if a general of regulars was in the field.

Colonel Washington took the only course possible in the circumstances. He resigned his commission in the Virginian army, giving his reasons in a few words of strong and indignant protest, and went home to Mount Vernon. He loved fighting, and the renunciation of his army career caused him profound grief and disappointment; but he could not keep both his commission and his self-respect, so the commission was resigned.

*In the Shadow of the Lord, Mrs. Hugh Fraser, p. 420*

## CHAPTER VIII

### THROUGH THE CAMPAIGN WITH BRADDOCK

#### The Young Commander and the Pig-headed Governor

On his return to civilization, Washington found his reputation of considerable service to him; instead of censuring him, the Burgesses accepted his explanations, thanked him for his bravery, and gave a pistole (about four dollars) to each of his soldiers. The young commander having been through a campaign and under fire, and experienced both victory and defeat, was now competent not only to fight the French, but to talk sense to the Governor, which was by far the more unpleasant and difficult task of the two.

Washington returned to Mount Vernon with a little glory, a great deal of disappointment, an empty pocket, and a decided inclination toward a military career. He had scarcely resumed control of his private affairs when Major Stobo, one of the hostages retained by the French as security for the return of Washington's first prisoners, succeeded in getting through to the English outposts a letter declaring that Fort Duquesne might be easily captured. This letter seems to have reached Governor Dinwiddie, probably through the Governor of Pennsylvania, to whom it was forwarded from the frontier; for the Virginia governor suddenly devised a forced march of light troops upon Fort Duquesne, and he forthwith ordered Washington to conduct such a movement.

Dinwiddie understood war about as a cat understands architecture; that is, he had sometimes crawled around on the outside of it. He had refused to return the French prisoners, although bound by the terms of capitulation to do so. He was holding troops in service although there

was no money with which to pay them or even to purchase supplies; and now, late in August, he proposed to begin a winter campaign with men some of whom were yet to be recruited, and without ammunition, subsistence, forage, clothing, or means of transportation. Washington succeeded in dissuading him from his senseless purpose; but the Governor had to vent his warlike spirit in some way, so he blundered into abusing the Burgesses for not voting him, free of restrictions, all the money he wanted. Then, for the purpose of preventing any disagreements about military precedence, he reorganized the Virginia troops into independent companies, no officer to be above the rank of captain. This masterly stroke of genius drove Colonel Washington out of the service. There is no knowing what additional brilliancies Dinwiddie might have perpetrated had not the Crown suppressed him somewhat by appointing Governor Sharpe, of Maryland, commander-in-chief of all forces engaged against the French.

*George Washington, John Habberton, p. 29.*

### Serious Troubles and Petty Annoyances

Serious troubles, moreover, were complicated by petty annoyances. A Maryland captain, at the head of thirty men, undertook to claim rank over the Virginian commander-in-chief because he had held a king's commission; and Washington was obliged to travel to Boston in order to have the miserable thing set right. . . . . This affair settled, he returned to take up again the old disheartening struggle, and his outspoken condemnation of Dinwiddie's foolish schemes and of the shortcomings of the government began to raise up backbiters and malcontents at Williamsburg. "My orders," he said, "are dark, doubtful, and uncertain; to-day approved, to-morrow condemned. Left to act and proceed at hazard, accountable for the consequences, and blamed without the benefit of defence." He determined nevertheless to bear with



his trials until the arrival of Lord Loudon, the new commander-in-chief, from whom he expected vigor and improvement. Unfortunately he was destined to have only fresh disappointment from the new general, for Lord Loudon was merely one more incompetent man added to the existing confusion. He paid no heed to the South, matters continued to go badly in the North, and Virginia was left helpless. So Washington toiled on with much discouragement, and the disagreeable attacks upon him increased. That it should have been so is not surprising, for he wrote to the governor, who now held him in much disfavor, to the speaker, and indeed to everyone, with a most galling plainness. He was young, be it remembered, and his high temper was by no means under perfect control. He was anything but diplomatic at that period of his life, and was far from patient, using language with much sincerity and force, and indulging in a blunt irony of rather a ferocious kind. When he was accused finally of getting up reports of imaginary dangers, his temper gave way entirely. He wrote wrathfully to the governor for justice, and added in a letter to his friend, Captain Peachy: "As to Colonel C.'s gross and infamous reflections on my conduct last spring, it will be needless, I dare say, to observe further at this time than that the liberty which he has been pleased to allow himself in sporting with my character is little else than a comic entertainment, discovering at one view his passionate fondness for your friend, his inviolable love of truth, his unfathomable knowledge, and the masterly strokes of his wisdom in displaying it. You are heartily welcome to make use of any letter or letters which I may at any time have written to you; for although I keep no copies of epistles to my friends nor can remember the contents of all of them, yet I am sensible that the narrations are just, and that truth and honesty will appear in my writings; of which, therefore, I shall not be ashamed, though criticism may censure my style."

**Washington, Franklin, and General Braddock**

About this time England sent over ten thousand pounds, with some firearms; learning which the Burgesses, being willing to assist the mother country, although unwilling to stand all the expense of a fight which was really between two European powers, voted twenty thousand pounds. It seemed as if in the prospective campaign there was to be no place for Washington; but in the following spring, General Edward Braddock was sent over from England to whip the French in every part of the country, and he invited Washington to become a member of his staff; which was the only judicious act of his entire military career in this country.

Braddock was a soldier who had enjoyed the blessings of many years of military drill and London loungings; he was courteous, brave, honorable in intent, headstrong and quick-tempered; some of his remaining military qualities are named in Colonel Calverly's recipe for making a heavy dragoon, in Gilbert and Sullivan's æsthetic opera, "Patience." What he did not know was not, in his opinion, worth knowing. There were but two men in the colonies to whom he would listen respectfully; one of these was Benjamin Franklin, who, being some centuries old when he was born, and having added to his knowledge about fifty years of experience, knew how to call a man a fool without hurting his feelings. The other was Washington, who lacked Franklin's appalling store of wisdom, but had the rare sense to talk only upon subjects that he understood.

But even Braddock's respect for these two men could not save him. When Franklin, in his sagacious way, tried to give Braddock some ideas about Indian warfare in such a manner that the General would believe he had thought them out for himself, the soldier replied that "These savages may be a formidable enemy to raw American militia, but upon the King's regular and disciplined troops it is

impossible that they should make an impression." After this knock-down argument, Franklin ceased to waste good counsel, although he was patriotic enough to secure for the army, on his own word of honor, the much needed horses and wagons that Braddock's imported quartermaster-general had been unable to obtain by unlimited threats and profanity.

Washington did not let Braddock off so easily; the young aid had what he himself terms "frequent disputes" with his general; that he survived them and retained his position is probably owing to his ability to keep his temper. How hard it must have been to retain this quality of human nature, may be judged from Washington's statement that Braddock was "incapable of giving up any points he asserts, be it ever so incompatible with reason or common sense."

*George Washington, John Habberton, p. 31.*

### General Braddock's Aide-de-camp

General Braddock set out from Alexandria on the 20th of April. Washington remained behind a few days to arrange his affairs, and then rejoined him at Fredericktown, in Maryland, where, on the 10th of May, he was proclaimed one of the general's *aides-de-camp*.

During the halt of the troops at Wills' Creek, Washington had been sent to Williamsburg to bring on four thousand pounds for the military chest. He returned, after a fortnight's absence, escorted from Winchester by eight men, "which eight men," writes he, "were two days assembling, but I believe would not have been more than as many seconds dispersing if I had been attacked."

Washington was disappointed in his anticipations of a rapid march. The general, though he had adopted his advice in the main, could not carry it out in detail. His military education was in the way, bigoted to the regular and elaborate tactics of Europe, he could not stoop to the

make-shift expedients of a new country, where every difficulty is encountered and mastered in a rough-and-ready style. "I found," said Washington, "that instead of pushing on with vigor, without regarding a little rough road, they were halting to level every mole-hill and to erect bridges over every brook, by which means we were four days in getting twelve miles."

For several days Washington had suffered from fever, accompanied by intense headache, and his illness increased in violence to such a degree that he was unable to ride, and had to be conveyed for a part of the time in a covered wagon. His illness continued without intermission until the 23d, "when I was relieved," says he, "by the general's absolutely ordering the physician to give me Dr. James' powders: one of the most excellent medicines in the world. It gave me immediate relief, and removed my fever and other complaints in four days' time."

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. I, pp. 204 to 223.

### **In the Battle at Fort Duquesne**

As soon as his fever abated a little he left Colonel Dunbar, and being unable to sit on a horse, was conveyed to the front in a wagon, coming up with the army on July 8th. He was just in time, for the next day the troops forded the Monongahela and marched to attack the fort. The splendid appearance of the soldiers as they crossed the river roused Washington's enthusiasm; but he was not without misgivings. . . .

The troops marched on in ordered ranks, glittering and beautiful. Suddenly firing was heard in the front, and presently the van was flung back on the main body. Yells and war-whoops resounded on every side, and an unseen enemy poured in a deadly fire. Washington begged Braddock to throw his men into the woods, but all in vain. Fight in platoons they must, or not at all. The result was that they did not fight at all. They became

panic-stricken, and huddled together, overcome with fear, until at last when Braddock was mortally wounded they broke in wild rout and fled. Of the regular troops, seven hundred, and of the officers, who showed the utmost bravery, sixty-two out of the eighty-six, were killed or wounded. Two hundred Frenchmen and six hundred Indians achieved this signal victory. The only thing that could be called fighting on the English side was done by the Virginians, "the raw American militia," who, spread out as skirmishers, met their foes on their own ground, and were cut off almost to a man.

Washington at the outset flung himself headlong into the fight. He rode up and down the field, carrying orders and striving to rally "the dastards," as he afterwards called the regular troops. He endeavored to bring up the artillery, but the men would not serve the guns, although he aimed and discharged one himself. All through that dreadful carnage he rode fiercely about, raging with the excitement of battle, and utterly exposed from beginning to end. Even now it makes the heart beat quicker to think of him amid the smoke and slaughter as he dashed hither and thither, his face glowing and his eyes shining with the fierce light of battle, leading on his own Virginians, and trying to stay the tide of disaster. He had two horses shot under him and four bullets through his coat. The Indians thought he bore a charmed life, while his death was reported in the colonies, together with his dying speech, which, he dryly wrote to his brother, he had not yet composed.

*George Washington* Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. I, p. 82

### **A Description of the Battle**

It was a bright July morning. The army was approaching Fort Duquesne; ten miles more, and it would be here. Proudly the soldiers moved along the valley of the Monongahela, wearing their bright red uniforms, their gun-barrels

and bayonets glaring in the sunlight, drums beating, trumpets sounding, and their banners waving. Lieutenant-colonel Gage, with three hundred men led the advance. He forded the river, crossed a plain, and ascended a hill. Mr. Gordon was in advance of all, with a company, marking out the road. General Braddock had no expectation of being attacked. He was to attack the French. Mr. Gordon beheld a man wearing a gray hunting-frock waving his hat. A silver gorget gleamed upon his breast. It was a French officer, Beaujean, who had come out from Fort Duquesne with two hundred and thirty Frenchmen and six hundred and thirty Indians, to give General Braddock a taste of fighting in the wilderness of America. From every tree there came a flash, and the head of Gage's column melted away; but the English fired a volley, and Beaujean and thirteen of his men went down.

Gage's artillerymen wheeled two cannon into position, and opened fire. The roar of the cannon echoes along the river, frightening the Indians, who started to run; but the French held their ground. The Indians came back, yelling the war-whoop.

"Vive le Roi!" shouted the French.

"Hurrah for King George!" cried the English.

Lieutenant-colonel Burton came up with a re-enforcement, but his troops were panic-stricken. General Braddock tried to rally his men. They loaded and fired at random; they saw flashes, puffs of smoke, but few of the enemy. There was firing in front, on both flanks and in the rear, where the Indians were shooting the horses of the baggage-train. The drivers fled. Men and officers were dropping all the time. Braddock was trying to form his men in platoons and battalions, after the method laid down in all military books; while the Virginians, accustomed to the wilderness, sprung behind rocks and trees, or fell flat on the ground, and watched their opportunity to put a bullet through the head of a Frenchman or Indian. Brad-

dock cursed them for not standing up in platoons, and struck them with his sword.

How preposterous! Whoever heard of a battle being fought in that way from behind trees!

Captain Waggoner placed his company of Virginians behind a fallen tree, which served them for a breast-work, and poured a telling volley upon the French, but the next minute fifty of them were killed by the panic-stricken British, who had so lost their wits that they took them to be Frenchmen. The French and Indians aimed to pick off all the English officers. Sir Peter Halket, Braddock's second in command, fell dead. Shirley, Braddock's secretary, went down with a bullet through his breast. Colonels Burton, Gage, and Orme, Major Spark, Major Halket, Captain Morris, all were wounded.

Washington's horse was killed. He mounted a second; that, too, was shot. A bullet went through his coat; another, a third, a fourth; but his time had not come to die. God had a great work for him to do for the human race, and this was the beginning.

All through the afternoon, from two o'clock to five, the hurly-burly went on—the English huddled in groups or scattered along the narrow road, firing away their ammunition, seeing only now and then a Frenchman or an Indian. The Virginians alone were cool, watching their opportunity, and sending bullets through the skulls of the savages as they peeped from behind the trees.

It was five o'clock in the afternoon; General Braddock had had five horses shot under him; he was issuing an order when a bullet struck him and he fell upon the ground. His troops threw aside their guns and knapsacks, then fled like a herd of frightened sheep. Washington tried to stop them. He begged, threatened, but in vain.

"Don't leave your general to be scalped!" shouted Colonel Orme. "I'll give you sixty guineas to carry him off."

What was Braddock or money to them? To escape was their only thought. Captain Stewart and another Virginian officer took the wounded general in their arms and bore him from the field. All through the night, all the next day, the English fled, the Virginians under Washington protecting the rear and carrying the wounded general.

The French and Indians made no attempt at pursuit; they had won a great victory, and were dividing the spoil—drinking the rum, eating the bacon, and counting their scalps in savage glee.

*Old Times in the Colonies*, Charles Carleton Coffin, p. 380.

### His Hatred of Cowardice

His fearlessness was equally shown by his hatred, and, indeed, non-comprehension of cowardice. In his first battle, upon the French surrendering, he wrote to the governor, "if the whole Detach't of the French behave with no more Resolution than this chosen Party did, I flatter myself we shall have no g't trouble in driving them to the d—." At Braddock's defeat, though the regiment he had commanded "behaved like men and died like soldiers," he could hardly find words to express his contempt for the conduct of the British "cowardly regulars," writing of their "dastardly behavior" when they "broke and ran as sheep before hounds" and raging over being "most scandalously" and "shamefully beaten."

*The True George Washington*, Paul Leicester Ford, p. 270.

### "Unite or Die!"

*E Pluribus Unum*, the motto on the great seal of the United States, is a crisp expression of the earnest teachings of Benjamin Franklin while going up and down among the colonies, as postmaster-general, as a special Indian commissioner and as a delegate to a convention of the colonies. He was an "all-round man" and was always around where



he was most needed. An ardent lover of liberty and justice, he was still, by force of his frankness and humor, the friend of those who represented the crown—and this without the least abatement of his deep conviction as to the rights and wrongs of the people. . . .

. . . In the French and Indian War, Franklin was a leader and had to raise men, horses, wagons and supplies, thus heartily coöperating with George Washington, then a rising Virginia officer, twenty-six years younger than himself.

It was while in the way of this duty that Franklin met General Braddock and attempted to advise that arrogant officer how he ought to fight the French and Indians. He wrote of Braddock:

"He smiled at my ignorance and replied, 'These savages may, indeed, be a formidable enemy to your raw American militia, but upon the king's regular and disciplined troops, sir, it is impossible they should make any impression.' "

Just before starting for Albany as a delegate to the colonial convention, in 1754, a wood-cut appeared in the "Pennsylvania Gazette," Franklin's newspaper, of a snake separated into sections representing the colonies; under the parted pieces was the legend, "Unite or Die." This design was adopted as one of the many flags of that troubled time. The payment of the expenses of the French and Indian War and the evasions of the crown and proprietaries aroused the righteous wrath of the people of Pennsylvania. These "proprietaries" were Richard and Thomas Penn, descendants of the great Quaker, William Penn, to whom Charles the Second had granted, eighty years before, the great tract of country to which he gave Penn's name. These degenerate descendants had not such lofty motives as actuated their really noble grandfather. Their sole purpose was to get as much revenue as possible out of their vast estate, which was then valued at about fifty million

dollars. They refused to pay taxes or bear any of the expenses of its defense in the later war with the French. So Franklin was sent to London to remonstrate with them and try to make even the king comprehend the real and righteous grievances of his subjects in America. He arrived in London in July, 1757, was detained five years by the dallying policy of the Penns, and came back without accomplishing much more than the tacit consent of the crown to the taxing of the proprietaries. After his return, Franklin threw himself more ardently than ever into the colonial cause. "United, we stand; divided, we fall," became his motto, for he was one of the first to discern that there was to be an "irrepressible conflict."

*The Franklin Story-Calendar, Wayne Whipple, October 16 to 29, 1910.*

### Denies "Grossly Exaggerated" Report of His Death

*(Letter to John Augustine Washington.)*

"FORT CUMBERLAND, 18 July, 1755.

"*Dear Brother:*

"As I have heard, since my arrival at this place, a circumstantial account of my death and dying speech, I take this early opportunity of contradicting the first, and of assuring you, that I have not as yet composed the latter. But, by the all-powerful dispensations of Providence, I have been protected beyond all human probability and expectation; for I had four bullets through my coat, and two horses shot under me, yet escaped unhurt, altho' death was leveling my companions on every side of me!"

"We have been most scandalously beaten by a trifling body of men, but fatigue and want of time will prevent me from giving you any of the details, until I have the happiness of seeing you at Mount Vernon, which I now most ardently wish for, since we are drove in thus far. A weak and feeble state of health obliges me to halt here for two or three days

to recover a little strength, that I may thereby be enabled to proceed homewards with more ease. You may expect to see me there on Saturday or Sunday se'-night, which is as soon as I can well be down, as I shall take my Bullskin Plantations in my way. Pray give my compliments to all my friends. I am, dear Jack, your most affectionate brother,"

[GEORGE]

*Writings of George Washington*, Edited by Lawrence B. Evans, Ph. D., p. 5.

### "I Could Offer Myself a Willing Sacrifice"

After the hasty retreat, Colonel Dunbar, stricken with panic, fled onward to Philadelphia, abandoning everything, and Virginia was left naturally in a state of great alarm. The assembly came together, and at last, thoroughly frightened, voted abundant money, and ordered a regiment of a thousand men to be raised. Washington, who had returned to Mount Vernon ill and worn-out, was urged to solicit the command, but it was not his way to solicit, and he declined to do so now. August 14th, he wrote to his mother: "If it is in my power to avoid going to the Ohio again, I shall; but if the command is pressed upon me by the general voice of the country, and offered upon such terms as cannot be objected against, it would reflect dishonor on me to refuse it!" The same day he was offered the command of all the Virginia forces on his own terms, and accepted. Virginia believed in Washington, and he was ready to obey her call.

He at once assumed command and betook himself to Winchester, a general without an army, but still able to check by his presence the existing panic, and ready to enter upon the trying, dreary, and fruitless work that lay before him. In April, 1757, he wrote: "I have been posted then, for more than twenty months past, upon our cold and barren frontiers, to perform, I think I may say, impossibilities; that is, to protect from the cruel incursions of a

crafty, savage enemy a line of inhabitants, of more than three hundred and fifty miles in extent, with a force inadequate to the task!" This terse statement covers all that can be said of the next three years. It was a long struggle against a savage foe in front, and narrowness, jealousy, and stupidity behind, apparently without any chance of effecting anything, or gaining any glory or reward. Troops were voted, but were raised with difficulty, and when raised were neglected and ill-treated by the wrangling governor and assembly, which caused much ill-suppressed wrath in the breast of the commander-in-chief who labored day and night to bring about better discipline in camp, and who wrote long letters to Williamsburg recounting existing evils and praying for a new militia law.

The troops, in fact, were got out with vast difficulty even under the most stinging necessity, and were almost worthless when they came. Of one "noble captain" who refused to come, Washington wrote: "With coolness and moderation this great captain answered that his wife, family, and corn were all at stake; so were those of his soldiers; therefore it was impossible for him to come. Such is the example of the officers; such the behavior of the men; and upon such circumstances depends the safety of our country!" But while the soldiers were neglected, and the assembly faltered, and the militia disobeyed, the French and Indians kept at work on the long exposed frontier. There panic reigned, farm-houses and villages went up in smoke, and the fields were reddened with slaughter at each fresh incursion. Gentlemen in Williamsburg bore these misfortunes with reasonable fortitude, but Washington raged against the abuses and the inaction, and vowed that nothing but the imminent danger prevented his resignation. "The supplicating tears of the women," he wrote, "and moving petitions of the men melt me into such deadly sorrow that I solemnly declare, if I know my own mind, I could offer myself a willing sacrifice to the butchering

enemy, provided that would contribute to the people's ease."

*George Washington*, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. I, p. 85.

### Close of His Career as a Frontier Fighter

So closed the first period in Washington's public career. We have seen him pass through it in all its phases. It shows him as an adventurous pioneer, as a reckless frontier fighter, and as a soldier of great promise. He learned many things in this time, and was taught much in the hard school of adversity. In the effort to conquer Frenchmen and Indians he studied the art of war, and at the same time he learned to bear with and overcome the dulness and inefficiency of the government he served. Thus he was forced to practise self-control in order to attain his ends, and to acquire skill in the management of men. There could have been no better training for the work he was to do in the after years, and the future showed how deeply he profited by it. Let us turn now, for a moment, to the softer and pleasanter side of life, and having seen what Washington was, and what he did as a fighting man, let us try to know him in the equally important and far more attractive domain of private and domestic life.

*George Washington*, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. I, p. 91.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE YOUNG COLONEL GOES COURTING

#### The Colonel of the Colony

During the three years that followed the Braddock campaign, Washington enjoyed all the honors and torments that his native colony could inflict upon him. He had rank, authority, men, and money; but what were all these to a soldier who was obliged to endure Dinwiddie? There can be no doubt that the old gentleman was hot for war, but some of the developments of his martial spirit were unspeakably exasperating to those who were expected to do the fighting. Although being a war governor was not an exact science in those days, it was not necessary that Dinwiddie should have been satisfied to display only the characteristics of an army mule, particularly as the customs of the time forbade that a governor should be treated according to his deserts. This conceited, obstinate, short-sighted, narrow-minded, jealous governor gave the military force more trouble than all the French and Indians on the border. Yet Washington, as the colonial commander-in-chief, did not proceed against the old fellow with powder and ball, or even drive him out of the country. Such self-restraint was phenomenal.

Fears that the French and Indians would transfer the seat of war to the settled portions of the colony made the Virginia Burgesses liberal of men and money, and a regiment of a thousand men was at once recruited. Washington became its colonel, for which Dinwiddie never forgave him, although he was obliged to sign his commission. The Governor's own candidate had been Colonel Innes, of North Carolina, who, like the Governor, was a

Scotchman, and was strongly supported by a number of his fellow countrymen. As the patriotic Scots of that period seemed to believe that the sites of the Garden of Eden and the town of Bethlehem were both in Scotland, and that the Scotch were the chosen race, they naturally clung together with great tenacity, and remembrance of the long and ugly fight over the Virginia colonelcy may have been the reason why, in the first draft of the Declaration of Independence, Scotchmen were classed with sundry creatures whose doings had been reprehensible.

As colonel of the Virginia regiment, Washington became commander-in-chief of the colony's forces. He established his headquarters at Winchester, which was the largest place near the border that had good lines of communication with the remainder of the colony.

*George Washington, John Habberton, p. 40.*

### How Colonel Washington "Took" Boston

One of the beauties of the military system of the day was, that each colony managed its own forces, under the nominal supervision of a commander-in-chief sent out from England. Quarrels were frequent over questions of rank, for some officers who bore commissions from the king were among the volunteers, and declined to receive orders from higher officers who had been commissioned only by governors. A Maryland captain named Dagworthy claimed command of Fort Cumberland on the strength of having held a king's commission, and a grand quarrel at once arose between Maryland and Virginia, which threatened to drive Washington out of the service. The case was finally referred to General Shirley, British commander-in-chief in America, and Washington was sent to the general to explain.

To this phase of the quarrel Washington owed one of the most enjoyable trips of his life; but this was only a minor result, for his journey brought him in contact with

Boston. It may be seen at first sight that an unfair advantage was taken of the young man, for he had not yet become the Father of his Country, while Boston, on the contrary, had been the Hub of the Universe for at least a century. Still, the man and the town impressed one another favorably; the original Yankee, being shapeless and awkward, could not fail to be greatly impressed by six feet two of symmetrical humanity; the original Yankee dressed very badly, whereas Washington was faultlessly and richly attired; Yankee horses were carefully modeled after dried codfish, and were about as sad-eyed and spiritless, whereas Washington rode into Boston on a magnificent charger, and even his colored servant was well mounted. The young Virginian "took the town" at once; the natives could not show him Bunker Hill Monument, the burnt district, or the Back Bay improvements, as now they would do within an hour of his arrival, but they gave him what they had—heartiness, patriotism, and beans. Concerning the latter, his letters are painfully silent; nothing but silence can do justice to some topics; but the people's hospitality and public spirit pleased him greatly.

*George Washington, John Habberton, p. 43.*

### **The Handsome Colonel Rode away to Boston Town**

The little cavalcade that left Virginia on February 4, 1756, must have looked brilliant enough as they rode away through the dark woods. First came the colonel, mounted of course on the finest of animals, for he loved and understood horses from the time when he rode bareback in the pasture to those later days when he acted as judge at a horse-race and saw his own pet colt "Magnolia" beaten. In this expedition he wore, of course, his uniform of buff and blue, with a white and scarlet cloak over his shoulders, and a sword-knot of red and gold. His "horse furniture" was of the best London make, trimmed with "livery lace," and the Washington arms were engraved upon the housings.







Copyright by The Century Co.

Engraved on Wood by W. Wellington from Original by Percy Moran.

COLONEL WASHINGTON INTRODUCED TO MARY PHILIPSE THE HEIRESS

Close by his side rode his two aides, likewise in buff and blue, and behind came his servants, dressed in the Washington colors of white and scarlet and wearing hats laced with silver. Thus accoutred, they all rode on together to the North.

The colonel's fame had gone before him, for the hero of Braddock's stricken field and the commander of the Virginia forces was known by reputation throughout the colonies. Every door flew open to him as he passed, and every one was delighted to welcome the young soldier. He was dined and wined and feted in Philadelphia, and again in New York, where he fell in love at apparently short notice with the heiress Mary Philipse, the sister-in-law of his friend Beverly Robinson. Tearing himself away from these attractions he pushed on to Boston, then the most important city on the continent, and the headquarters of Shirley, the commander-in-chief. The little New England capital had at that time a society which, rich for those days, was relieved from its Puritan sombreness by the gayety and life brought in by the royal officers. Here Washington lingered ten days, talking war and politics with the governor, visiting in state the "great and general court," dancing every night at some ball, dining with and being feted by the magnates of the town. His business done, he returned to New York, tarried there awhile for the sake of the fair dame, but came to no conclusions, and then, like the soldier in the song, he gave his bridle-rein a shake and rode away to the South, and to the harassed and ravaged frontier of Virginia.

*George Washington, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. I, p. 95.*

### A Chain of Forts and the Gentlemen Associators

Washington's Boston trip was entirely successful, so far as the question of rank between him and the Maryland Captain Dagworthy was concerned. General Shirley was not any wiser than the majority of generals whom England

at that time exported to America, but he knew enough to determine that a colonel outranked a captain, even if the latter happened to be serving in his own native province. On other questions of rank, however, Shirley was unsatisfactory; Washington was unable to secure King's commissions for himself and his officers, although this desire was stronger in him than the wish to teach the meddlesome Dagworthy his place. . . .

On returning to Virginia, he went promptly to work. From Eastern statesmen and drawing-rooms to Dinwiddie and a back-woods camp was a terrible change; but Washington did not, as many another officer would have done, engineer a sick leave and hurry back to a desirable city to prescribe for himself at trusty bar-rooms. He went right to work in the Shenandoah valley to repel invasion, and his task was as great as his strength and temper could endure. Fortunately his old friend Lord Fairfax, an active, brave sensible, soldierly, influential old fellow, lived in the valley, and was never appealed to in vain for counsel, means, or sympathetic profanity. There was not a particle of glory to be gained by defensive work on the border, but glory was exactly what the young officer did not need, however much he may have longed for it. Like every other young fellow who is worth keeping, he had to endure the experiences that suppress conceit and develop character. Glory, ease, even the opportunity to "show off," was denied him. Every military commander has some thorn in his flesh, but in Dinwiddie Washington found a boundless forest of thorns, in which all the underbrush was briars. The old marplot indited orders that were impossible of execution, and then countermanded them by orders that were worse. For only one thing could he uniformly trusted, and that was, to oppose any measure that Washington suggested.

One of the old man's lunacies, in which he was supported by the Burgesses, was the establishing of twenty-three forts, on a border line about four hundred miles long,

there being but fifteen hundred men to distribute among them. It is somewhat remarkable that the French, with their known instinct of politeness, never sent Dinwiddie a vote of thanks for this unequalled plan for annihilating all the provincial forces. Then, as if he were determined to start an insane asylum with Washington as first patient, Dinwiddie turned loose upon the young commander a hundred men, called the Gentlemen Associators, who were to assist in selecting locations for the new forts. As all of the Associators were civilians they of course knew every thing worth knowing about military affairs.

*George Washington, John Habberton, p. 47.*

### Big George Washington

While he was at Mount Vernon he saw all his horses again,—“Valiant” and “Magnolia” and “Chinkling” and “Ajax,”—and had grand gallops over the country.

He had some fine dogs, too, to run by his side, and help him hunt the bushy-tailed foxes. “Vulcan” and “Ringwood” and “Music” and “Sweetlips” were the names of some of them. You may be sure the dogs were glad when they had their master home again.

But Washington did not have long to rest, for another war was coming, the great war of the Revolution.

*The Story Hour, Nora A. Smith, p. 125.*

### Broken in Health

In the winter of 1758 his health broke down completely. He was so ill that he thought that his constitution was seriously injured; and therefore withdrew to Mount Vernon, where he slowly recovered. Meantime a great man came at last to the head of affairs in England, and, inspired by William Pitt, fleets and armies went forth to conquer. Reviving at the prospect, Washington offered his services to General Forbes who had come to undertake the

task which Braddock had failed to accomplish. Once more English troops appeared, and a large army was gathered. Then the old story began again and Washington, whose proffered aid had been gladly received, chafed and worried all summer at the fresh spectacle of delay and stupidity which was presented to him. His advice was disregarded, and all the weary business of building new roads through the wilderness was once more undertaken. A detachment, sent forward contrary to his views, met with the fate of Braddock, and as the summer passed, and autumn changed to winter, it looked as if nothing would be gained in return for so much toil and preparation. But Pitt had conquered the Ohio in Canada, news arrived of the withdrawal of the French, the army pressed on, and, with Washington in the van, marching into the smoking ruins of Fort Duquesne, henceforth to be known to the world as Fort Pitt.

*George Washington*, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. 1, p. 90.

### **A Brief but Courtly Courtship**

As the story runs, Colonel Washington, attended by his servant Bishop, was crossing William's Ferry, which was directly opposite the Chamberlayne house, on his way to the capital of the colony, where he had some business of importance with the Governor. Major Chamberlayne met him at the ferry, and pressed him to accept the hospitality of his house for a day or two. Colonel Washington at first declined, in consequence of the important business that claimed his presence in Williamsburg; but when the hospitable gentleman added to his persuasions the inducement that the loveliest widow in all Virginia was under his roof, the young officer loosed his bridle rein, accepted the invitation to dine with Major Chamberlayne, and gave Bishop orders to have the horses ready for departure at an early hour in the afternoon.

The story of this brief soldierly wooing has often been





*From the Original by Alonzo Chappel.*

COLONEL WASHINGTON VISITS MRS. CUSTIS



told, but by no person who had better opportunities of giving a correct version of it than Mr. G. W. P. Custis, in his "Recollections of Washington." He says that "they were mutually pleased on this their first interview, nor is it remarkable; they were of an age when impressions are strongest. The lady was fair to behold, of fascinating manners and splendidly endowed with worldly benefits. The hero fresh from his early fields, redolent of fame, and with a form on which 'every god did seem to set his seal, to give the world assurance of a man.' " The morning passed pleasantly away. Evening came, with Bishop, true to his orders, firm at his post, holding his favorite charger with one hand, while with the other he was waiting to offer the ready stirrup. The sun sank in the horizon, yet the colonel appeared not. And then the old soldier marveled at his chief's delay. "'Twas strange, 'twas passing strange,'—surely he was not wont to be a single moment behind his appointments, for he was the most punctual of all men. Meantime the host enjoyed the scene of the veteran on duty at the gate while the Colonel was so agreeably employed in the parlor, and proclaiming that no guest ever left his house after sunset, his military visitor was, without much difficulty, persuaded to order Bishop to put up the horses for the night. The sun rode high in the heavens the ensuing day when the enamored soldier pressed with his spur his charger's side, and speeded on his way to the seat of the government."

Upon his return from Williamsburg, Colonel Washington visited Mrs. Custis in her own house. Tradition says that upon this occasion the lover was rowed across the river by a slave, who, when asked whether his mistress was at home, replied, "Yes, sah, I reckon you's the man what's expected"; which proves that the fair widow was in readiness to receive her guest. The engagement evidently took place during this visit, as the lovers did not meet again until the time of their marriage, the following January.

**"A Few Words" to His Affianced***(Letter to Mrs. Martha Custis.)*

"JULY 20, 1758.

"We have begun our march for the Ohio. A courier is starting for Williamsburg, and I embrace the opportunity to send a few words to one whose life is now inseparable from mine. Since that happy hour when we made our pledges to each other, my thoughts have been continually going to you as another self. That an all-powerful Providence may keep us both in safety is the prayer of your ever faithful and affectionate friend,"

[G. WASHINGTON.]

*Writings of George Washington, Edited by Lawrence B. Evans, Ph.D., p. 6.***"The Story of an Untold Love"**

It has been asserted that Washington loved the wife of his friend George William Fairfax, but the evidence has not been produced. On the contrary, though the two corresponded, it was in a purely platonic fashion, very different from the strain of lovers, and that the correspondence implied nothing is to be found in the fact that he and Sally Carlyle (another Fairfax daughter) also wrote each other quite as frequently and on the same friendly footing; indeed, Washington evidently classed them in the same category, when he stated that "I have wrote to my two female correspondents." Thus the claim seems due, like many another of Washington's mythical love-affairs, rather to the desire of descendants to link their family "to a star" than to more substantial basis. Washington did, indeed, write to Sally Fairfax from the frontier, "I should think our time more agreeably spent, believe me, in playing a part in Cato, with the company you mention, and myself doubly happy in being the Juba to such a Marcia as you must make," but private theatricals then

no more than now implied "passionate love." What is more, Mrs. Fairfax was at this very time teasing him about another woman, and to her hints Washington replied:

"If you allow that any honor can be derived from my opposition . . . you destroy the merit of it entirely in me by attributing my anxiety to the animating prospect of possessing Mrs. Custis, when—I need not tell you, guess yourself. Should not my own Honor and the country's welfare be the excitement? 'Tis true I profess myself a votary of love. I acknowledge that a lady is in the case, and further I confess that this lady is known to you. Yes, Madame, as well as she is one who is too sensible of her charms to deny the Power whose influence he feels and must ever submit to. I feel the force of her amiable beauties in the recollection of a thousand tender passages that I would wish to obliterate, till I am bid revive them. But experience, alas! sadly reminds me how impossible this is, and evinces an opinion which I have long entertained that there is a Destiny which has the control of our actions, not to be resisted by the strongest efforts of Human Nature. You have drawn me, dear Madame, or rather I have drawn myself, into an honest confession of a simple Fact. Misconstrue not my meaning; doubt it not, nor expose it. The world has no business to know the object of my love, declared in this manner to you, when I want to conceal it. One thing above all things in this world I wish to know, and only one person of your acquaintance can solve me that, or guess my meaning?"

*The True George Washington, Paul Leicester Ford, p. 91.*

### The Fall of Fort Duquesne

As they approached Fort Duquesne, the mementos of former disasters became more frequent; and the bones of those massacred in the defeat of Braddock still lay scattered about the battlefield, whitening in the sun.

At length the army arrived in sight of Fort Duquesne,

advancing with great precaution, and expecting a vigorous defense; but that formidable fortress, the terror and scourge of the frontier, and the object of such warlike enterprise, fell without a blow. . . . On the 25th of November, Washington, with the advanced guard, marched in, and planted the British flag on the yet smoking ruins.

One of the first offices of the army was to collect and bury, in one common tomb, the bones of their fellow-soldiers who had fallen in the battles of Braddock and Grant. In this pious duty it is said every one joined; and some veterans assisted, with heavy hearts and frequent ejaculations of poignant feeling, who had been present in the scenes of defeat and carnage. . . .

The reduction of Fort Duquesne terminated, as Washington had foreseen, the troubles and dangers of the southern frontiers. The French domination of the Ohio was at an end; the Indians, as usual, paid homage to the conquering power, and a treaty of peace was concluded with all the tribes between the Ohio and the lakes.

With this campaign ended, for the present, the military career of Washington. His great object was attained, the restoration of quiet and security to his native province; and having abandoned all hope of attaining rank in the regular army, and his health being much impaired, he gave up his commission at the close of the year, and retired from the service, followed by the applause of his fellow-soldiers, and the gratitude and admiration of all his countrymen.

*Life of George Washington, Washington Irving, Vol. I. p. 337.*

### **Elected to the House of Burgesses**

Washington's anxiety to end the Fort Duquesne expedition and the war must have made him an intolerable bore to everyone with whom he came in contact—every one but Mrs. Custis, of course. About this time it was natural that Washington should have had more than his ordinarily high regard for his personal appearance; for a

man who is in love and has been accepted, always betrays his secret by a general improvement of his dress. Washington, on the contrary, went to the opposite extremes. The uniform of the army, like that of all other armies of the period, was inexpressibly inappropriate to soldiers whose only duties were not drill, parade, and lounging, so Washington reformed it. The cumbrous, heavy coats were exchanged for thick flannel shirts, and the top coats for blankets, so that every volunteer became as unsightly and personally effective as an Indian. To popularize this dress, Washington himself wore it, though probably not in the presence of his sweetheart, and it is greatly to be regretted that no one thought to paint his picture at that time, for the picture would have impressed the man upon the public mind with an informal distinctness that would have been proof against all subsequent Fourth of July nonsense.

As Washington purposed retiring from military service at the close of the campaign, he proposed himself for election to the House of Burgesses. This move must not be construed to indicate the usual desire of retired soldiers to go into politics, for in Washington's day American legislators devoted themselves to public business, instead of personal aggrandizement. Although the county for which he stood was one in which he had frequently been obliged to enforce military customs that were distasteful to the voters' pockets, and although he did not make a stump speech, he was elected by a handsome majority.

*George Washington, John Habberton, p. 54.*

Washington sent on a mission to the French.....	1753
Franklin announces that the Colonies must "Unite or Die," at the Albany Convention .....	1754
Braddock defeated at Fort Duquesne.....	1755
Fort Duquesne taken and named Fort Pitt by the English.....	1758
Washington's marriage .....	January 6, 1759
Wolf captures Quebec.....	1759

## CHAPTER X

### THE WEALTHY PLANTER OF MOUNT VERNON

#### The Sunshine and Glitter of the Wedding Day

As soon as Fort Duquesne had failed he hurried home, resigned his commission in the last week of December, and was married on January 6, 1759. It was a brilliant wedding party which assembled on that winter day in the little church near the White House. There were gathered Francis Fauquier, the gay, free-thinking, high-living governor, gorgeous in scarlet and gold; British officers, red-coated and gold-laced, and all the neighboring gentry in the handsomest clothes that London credit could furnish. The bride was attired in silk and satin, laces and brocade, with pearls on her neck and in her ears; while the bridegroom appeared in blue and silver trimmed with scarlet, and with gold buckles at his knees and on his shoes. After the ceremony the bride was taken home in a coach and six, her husband riding beside her, mounted on a splendid horse and followed by all the gentlemen of the party.

The sunshine and glitter of the wedding-day must have appeared to Washington deeply appropriate, for he certainly seemed to have all that heart of man could desire. Just twenty-seven, in the first flush of young manhood, keen of sense and yet wise in experience, life must have looked very fair and smiling. He had left the army with a well-earned fame, and had come home to take the wife of his choice and enjoy the good-will and respect of all men. While away on his last campaign he had been elected a member of the House of Burgesses, and when he took his seat on removing to Williamsburg, three months after his marriage, Mr. Robinson, the speaker, thanked him publicly





*Engraved by J. Rogers from the Painting by John Woolaston.*

MRS. MARTHA DANDRIDGE CUSTIS WASHINGTON



in eloquent words for his services to the country. Washington rose to reply, but he was so utterly unable to talk about himself that he stood before the House stammering and blushing, until the speaker said, "Sit down, Mr. Washington; your modesty equals your valor, and that surpasses the power of any language I possess." It is an old story, and as graceful as it is old, but it was all very grateful to Washington, especially as the words of the speaker bodied forth the feelings of Virginia. Such an atmosphere, filled with deserved respect and praise, was pleasant to begin with, and then he had everything else too.

*George Washington*, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. I, p. 98.

### Married Life at Mount Vernon

For sixteen years George Washington, benedict, was permitted to pursue, at Mount Vernon, the life of an English country gentleman. His wife, one of the most wealthy women of the country, was unable to manage her large estates, and Washington, of course, added this care to his own. Aside from his father's small legacy, the death of his half-brother, Lawrence, and of Lawrence's only child, had left Mount Vernon and other valuable properties to him. Like other Virginia planters, Washington owned slaves. He deplored this necessity and always used his influence to have the institution abolished gradually and legally. He cared for his wife's children and looked after their estates. When the daughter "Patsy" Custis died, her property reverted to her mother, adding greatly to the wealth of the Washingtons. The master of Mount Vernon ordered wearing apparel, liveries for his servants, equipages, harness, and accoutrements from England. The Washingtons entertained hospitably, kept a bench and a stud, and rode to hounds with the Fairfaxes and others of the neighboring gentry. When Mrs. Washington rode out she had her coach and four and was attended by black postilions in white and scarlet. . . .

For years after the French and Indian War, Colonel Washington was the champion of his former soldiers, looking after the interests of many of them, once taking a journey down the Ohio into the wilds of Kentucky to claim lands which some men, who could not afford to go themselves, had received in payment of their services with him on the frontier. One of these, a major who had been reproved for cowardice at Great Meadows, thinking he had been omitted in the distribution of land, wrote an abusive letter to Washington about it. To him the Colonel replied:

"Your impertinent letter was delivered to me yesterday. As I am not accustomed to receive such from any man, nor would have taken the same language from you personally without letting you feel some marks of my resentment, I would advise you to be cautious in writing me a second of the same tenor. But for your stupidity and sottishness you might have known, by attending to a public gazette, that you had your full quantity of ten thousand acres of land allowed you. But suppose you had really fallen short, do you think your superlative merit entitles you to a greater indulgence than others? . . . All my concern is that I ever engaged in behalf of so ungrateful a fellow as you are."

*The Washington Story-Calendar* Wayne Whipple, July 31 to Aug. 6, 1910.

### **Taking Charge of the Custis Estate**

"WILLIAMSBURG, 1 May, 1759.

*"To Robert Cary, Merchant, London.*

"Sir,—The enclosed is the clergyman's certificate of my marriage with Mrs. Martha Custis, properly authenticated. You will therefore for the future please address all your letters which relate to the affairs of the late Daniel Parke Custis to me, as by marriage I am entitled to a third part of that estate, and am invested likewise with a care of the other two-thirds by a decree of our General Court,

which I obtained in order to strengthen the power I before had in consequence of my wife's administration.

"At present this serves only to advise you of the above change, and at the same time to acquaint you that I shall continue to make you the same consignments of tobacco as usual, and will endeavor to increase them in proportion as I find myself and the estate benefited thereby.

"On the other side is an invoice of some goods which I beg you to send me by the first ship bound either for the Potomac or to the Rappahannock, as I am in immediate want of them. Let them be insured, and in case of accident, reshipped without delay. Direct for me at Mount Vernon, Potomac River, Virginia. The former is the name of my seat, and the other of the river on which it is situated."

About a year after this he had occasion to write substantially as follows: "By this conveyance you will receive invoices of such goods as are wanting, which please to send as there directed by Captain J., in the spring, and let me beseech you to give the necessary directions for purchasing them upon the best terms. It is needless for me to particularize the sorts, qualities or taste I would choose to have them in, unless my directions are observed; and you may believe me when I tell you that instead of getting things good and fashionable in their several kinds, we often have articles sent us that could only have been used by our forefathers in days of yore.

"It is a custom, I have some reason to believe, with many of the shopkeepers and tradesmen of London, when they know goods are bespoke for exportation to palm sometimes very old, and sometimes very slight and indifferent ones upon us—taking care at the same time to advance ten, fifteen, or perhaps twenty per cent. upon them in price."

### A Kind and Indulgent Stepfather

It is reported that he was a good stepfather, and, to quote from England's new national anthem, "it's greatly to his credit," for usually the first move of a man who marries a pretty widow is to get her children out of the way by sending them off to boarding-school. But Washington loved the Custis children. He did all in his power to prevent his stepson making a fool of himself by marrying too early, and when Miss Custis was on her death-bed her stepfather was not ashamed to spend a great deal of time on his knees in prayer for her recovery. Indeed, he seems never to have outlived the habit of praying; like every other man of noble nature, high aspirations, and trying experiences, he frequently came upon times when the Almighty was the only being to whom he could talk without being misunderstood.

He was one of the very few Southern planters who considered that no man was too good to manage his own business. Instead of lying abed far into the morning, getting up with a headache, and making a household nuisance of himself, he arose early and saw that the day's work of the plantation was properly started. He could handle a shovel or ax, and he invented a plow, had it made in one of his shops, and tested it with his own carriage horses. He owned slaves and kept them busy, but there is no record of his having "licked his nigger," and by his will he provided for the freeing of them all; he had long desired to do this and was prevented only by the family complications which the Custis blacks and his own had formed by marrying.

In short, Washington was a model young man. We have alleged models for youth nowadays, but they are short, slight, feeble in health, and feeble of will; their blood is thin, their arms small, their eyes weak, and their heads weaker. They do nothing wrong, for about the same reason that a corpse refrains from sin, but they do nothing

right except as a matter of habit and superior convenience. They do not force themselves upon society, for they have no force, nor anything to sustain them when among other men. But Washington was evidently a fine specimen of physical manhood; tall, broad, deep-chested, hot-blooded, rich, admired by every one, he had every physical quality and personal environment that is named when men explain how certain other fine fellows have gone to the bad. But instead of aping the English "blood," as most of the lively, well-to-do young fellows of the present day are doing, he established a standard for the American blood. He was a faithful husband, and a very affectionate brevet parent. He was a staunch friend and an honorable master, the last named capacity being the rarest of all in which men excel. He never was too proud, lazy, or careless to manage his own business, and in his dealings with other men his honesty did not begin and end with paying his debts. He used the world without abusing it, enjoying many a good dinner, dance, fox-hunt, and horse-race, yet he attended church as regularly as he went to more festive gatherings, and was equal to an immense amount of praying when occasion demanded it. Neither riches nor personal feeling could make him ashamed to go to the legislature, or, when there, to make speeches for the sake of hearing himself talk, or burden the mails with printed reproductions of his efforts; yet when the occasion for talk was really presented, he showed himself as eloquent a speaker as was on record in America. Instead of straining always for something new, he had the noble quality of contentment, striving in all public and private affairs to make the most of a bird in hand, rather than chase phantasmal flocks and coveys through unfamiliar bushes. If any young man has, through familiarity with Washington's name and alleged lineaments, been inclined to regard the Father of His Country as a prig, let him search history and tradition for a finer illustration of what a full-blooded man should be.

### Life of a Virginia Planter

It was no light matter to be a Virginia planter, when one had so high a standard of excellence as George Washington had. The main crop which he raised was tobacco, and the immediate attention which it required was only during a small part of the year; but, as we have seen, a successful planter was also a man of business, and really the governor of a little province. Many planters contented themselves with leaving the care of their estates and their negroes to overseers, while they themselves spent their time in visiting and receiving visits, in sport and politics. That was not Washington's way. He might easily have done so, for he had money enough; but such a life would have been very distasteful to a man who had undergone the hardships of a soldier, and had acquired habits of thoroughness and of love of work. It would have been no pleasure to Washington to be idle and self-indulgent, while seeing his fences tumbling down, and knowing that he was spending more money for everything than was necessary. The man who attends to his own affairs, and sees everything thriving under wise management, is the most contented man, and Washington's heart was in his work.

So he looked after everything himself. He rose early, often before light, when the days were short. He breakfasted lightly at seven in the summer and at eight in the winter, and after breakfast was in the saddle visiting the different parts of his estate, and looking after any improvements he had ordered. He was a splendid horseman and very fond of breaking in new horses. Dinner followed at two o'clock; he had an early tea; and when living at home, he was often in bed by nine o'clock.

These were regular old-fashioned hours, and the life which he led enabled him to accomplish a vast amount. He kept no clerk, but wrote out in his large round hand all

his letters and orders, entered every item in his day-book and ledger, and was scrupulously exact about every farthing of his accounts. He did not guess how he stood at any time, but he knew precisely how last year's crop compared with this year's; how many head of cattle he had; how many acres he had planted with tobacco; what wood he had cut; and just what goods he had ordered from London. He had been appointed by the court, guardian of his wife's two children, who had inherited property from their father; and he kept all their accounts separate, with the minutest care, for he held a trust to be sacred.

Twice a year he sent to his agent in London a list of such articles as he needed; there were plows, hoes, spades, and other agricultural implements; drugs, groceries of various sorts, clothes both for his family and for his negroes; tools, books, busts and ornaments; household furniture, and linen. Indeed, as one reads the long invoices which Washington sent to London, he wonders how people managed who had to send across the Atlantic for everything they might possibly need for the next six months. Then there were special orders for the children; for "Master Custis, six years old," there were, besides Irish holland, fine cambric, gloves, shoes, stockings, hats, combs, and brushes, such items as these,—“one pair handsome silver shoe and knee buckles, ten shillings' worth of toys, and six little books, for children beginning to read;” while for “Miss Custis, four years old,” were a great variety of clothes, including “two caps, two pairs of ruffles, two tuckers, bibs, and aprons if fashionable,” and finally, a “fashionable dressed baby, ten shillings, and other toys” to the same amount.

He required his agent to send him, with his bill for all the goods, the original bills of the merchants who sold the goods to the agent; then he copied all these orders and bills, giving every item, and in this way he had before him in his books an exact statement, in every particular, of his transactions.

He watched the market closely, and knew just what the varying price of tobacco was, and what he might expect for any other goods which he sent to be sold. He was determined that everything from his plantation should be of value and should receive its full price. So high a reputation did he secure for honesty that it was said that any barrel of flour that bore the brand of George Washington, Mount Vernon, was exempted from the customary inspection in the West Indian ports.

*George Washington, an Historical Biography, Horace E. Scudder, p. 100.*

### **Manufacturer and Fisherman as Well as Farmer**

The magnitude of the charge of such an estate can be better understood when the condition of a Virginia plantation is realized. Before the Revolution practically everything the plantation could not produce was ordered yearly from Great Britain, and after the annual delivery of the invoices the estate could look for little outside help. Nor did this change rapidly after the Revolution, and during the period of Washington's management almost everything was bought in yearly supplies. This system compelled each plantation to be a little world unto itself; indeed, the three hundred souls on the Mount Vernon estate went far to make it a distinct and self-supporting community, and one of Washington's standing orders to his overseers was to "buy nothing you can make yourselves." Thus the planting and gathering of the crops were but a small part of the work to be done.

A corps of workmen—some negroes, some indentured servants, and some hired laborers—were kept on the estate. A blacksmith-shop occupied some, doing not merely the work of the plantation, but whatever business was brought to them from outside; and a wood-burner kept them and the mansion-house supplied with charcoal. A gang of carpenters were kept busy, and their spare time was utilized in framing houses to be put up in Alexandria, or in



the "Federal City," as Washington was called before the death of its namesake. A brick-maker, too, was kept constantly employed, and masons utilized the product of his labor. The gardener's gang had charge of the kitchen-garden, and set out thousands of grape-vines, fruit-trees, and hedge-plants.

A water-mill, with its staff, not merely ground meal for the hands, but produced a fine flour that commanded extra price in the market. In 1786 Washington asserted that his flour was "equal, I believe, in quality to any made in this country," and the Mount Vernon brand was of such value that some money was made by buying outside wheat and grinding it into flour. The coopers of the estate made the barrels in which it was packed, and Washington's schooner carried it to market.

The estate had its own shoemaker and in time a staff of weavers was trained. Before this was obtained, in 1760, though with only a modicum of the force he presently had, Washington ordered from London "450 ells of Osnabrig, 4 pieces of Brown Wools, 350 yards of Kendall Cotton and 100 yards of Dutch blanket." By 1768 he was manufacturing the chief part of his requirements, for in that year his weavers produced eight hundred and fifteen and one-quarter yards of linen, three hundred and sixty-five and one-quarter yards of woolen, one hundred and forty-four yards of linsey, and forty yards of cotton, or a total of thirteen hundred and sixty-five and one-half yards, one man and five negro girls having been employed. When once the looms were well organized an infinite variety of cloths was produced, the accounts mentioning "striped woolen, woolen plaided, cotton striped, linen, wool-birdseye, cotton filled with wool, linsey, M.'s and O.'s, cotton India dimity, cotton jump stripe, linen filled with tow, cotton striped with silk, Roman M., Janes twilled, huccabac, broadcloth, counter-pain, birdseye diaper, kirsey wool, barragon, fustian, bed-ticking, herring-box, and shalloon."

One of the most important features of the estate was its fishery, for the catch, salted down, largely served in place of meat for the negroes' food. Of this advantage Washington wrote, "This river . . . is well supplied with various kinds of fish at all seasons of the year; and, in the spring, with the greatest profusion of shad, herrings, bass, carp, perch, sturgeon, &c. Several valuable fisheries appertain to the estate; the whole shore, in short, is one entire fishery." Whenever there was a run of fish, the seine was drawn, chiefly for herring and shad. and in good years this not merely amply supplied the home requirements, but allowed of sales; four or five shillings the thousand for herring and ten shillings the hundred for shad were the average prices, and sales of as high as eighty-five thousand herring were made in a single year.

*The True George Washington*, Paul Leicester Ford, p. 120.

### Where to Build the New Church

There was always a Washington to surprise people. There was the still, self-controlled, grave man, who suddenly flashed forth a resolute act, seizing the opportunity, and doing the one thing which was instantly demanded; and there was the quick-tempered fiery man who held himself in check, waited for other people to speak and act, and then came forward with a few plain, deliberate words, which showed that he had grasped the whole situation, and could be depended on to carry through his resolution patiently and persistently.

There were, as I have said, few towns in Virginia. The divisions were by parishes, after the old English custom, and so when a man was of importance in his neighborhood he was very apt to be a vestryman in his parish. Mount Vernon was in Truro parish, and Washington was a vestryman there, as also in Fairfax parish. It happened that the church of Truro parish had fallen into decay, and was in sorry condition. It was necessary to build a new one, and

several meetings were held, for two parties had sprung up, one wished to rebuild on the same spot; and another urging some location more convenient to the parishioners, for the place where the old church had stood was not a central one. Finally a meeting was called to settle the matter. One of Washington's friends, George Mason, a man of fine speech, rose up and spoke most eloquently in favor of holding to the old site; there their fathers had worshipped, and there had their bodies been laid to rest. Every one seemed moved and ready to accept Mason's proposal.

Washington had also come prepared with a plea. He had not Mason's power of speech, but he took from his pocket a roll of paper and spread it before the meeting. On this sheet he had drawn off a plan of Truro parish; upon the plan were marked plainly the site of the old church, the place where every parishioner lived, and the spot which he advised for the site for the new church. He said very little; he simply showed the people his survey, and let them see for themselves that every consideration of convenience and fairness pointed to the new site as the one to be chosen. It was central, and no one could fail to see that the church was first of all for the living. His argument was the argument of good sense and reasonableness, and it carried the day against Mason's eloquent speech. Pohick Church, which was built on the new site, was constructed from plans which Washington himself drew.

*George Washington, an Historical Biography, Horace E. Scudder, p. 116.*

### Pleasantest Glimpses of Family Feeling

The pleasantest glimpses of family feeling are gained, however, in his relations with his wife's children and grandchildren. John Parke and Martha Parke Custis—or "Jack" and "Patsy," as he called them—were at the date of his marriage respectively six and four years of age, and in the first invoice of goods to be shipped to him from London after he had become their stepfather, Washington ordered "10

shillings worth fo Toys," "6 little books for children beginning to read," and "1 fashionable-dressed baby to cost 10 shillings." When this latter shared the usual fate, he further wrote for "1 fashionable dress Doll to cost a guinea," and for "a box of Gingerbread Toys & Sugar Images or Comfits." A little later he ordered a Bible and Prayer-Book for each, "neatly bound in Turkey," with names "in gilt letters on the inside of the cover," followed ere long by an order for "1 very good Spinet." As Patsy grew to girlhood she developed fits, and "solely on her account to try (by the advice of her Physician) the effect of the waters on her Complaint," Washington took the family over the mountains and camped at the "Warm Springs" in 1769, with "little benefit," for, after ailing four years longer, "she was seized with one of her usual Fits & expired in it, in less than two minutes without uttering a word, or groan, or scarce a sigh." "The Sweet Innocent Girl," Washington wrote, "entered into a more happy & peaceful abode than she has met with in the afflicted Path she has hitherto trod," but none the less "it is an easier matter to conceive than to describe the distress of this family" at the loss of "dear Patsy Custis."

*The True George Washington*, Paul Leicester Ford, p. 29.

### Beating a Rascally Poacher

He hunted almost every day in the season, usually with success, but always with persistence. Like all true sportsmen Washington had a horror of illicit sport of any kind, and although he shot comparatively little, he was much annoyed by a vagabond who lurked in the creeks and inlets on his estate, and slaughtered his canvas-back ducks. Hearing the report of a gun one morning, he rode through the bushes and saw his poaching friend just shoving off in a canoe. The rascal raised his gun and covered his pursuer, whereupon Washington, the cold-blooded and patient person so familiar in the myths, dashed his

horse headlong into the water, seized the gun, grasped the canoe, and dragging it ashore pulled the man out of the boat and beat him soundly. If the man had yielded at once he would probably have got off easily enough, but when he put Washington's life in imminent peril, the wild fighting spirit flared up as usual.

The hunting season was of course that of the most lavish hospitality. There was always a great deal of dining about, but Mount Vernon was the chief resort, and its doors, ever open, were flung far back when people came for a meet, or gathered to talk over the events of a good run. Company was the rule and solitude the exception. When only the family were at dinner, the fact was written down in the diary with great care as an unusual event, for Washington was the soul of hospitality, and although he kept early hours, he loved society and a houseful of people. Profoundly reserved and silent as to himself, a lover of solitude so far as his own thoughts and feelings were concerned, he was far from being a solitary man in the ordinary acceptation of the word. He liked life and gaiety and conversation, he liked music and dancing or a game of cards when the weather was bad, and he enjoyed heartily the presence of young people and of his own friends. So Mount Vernon was always full of guests, and the master noted in his diary that although he owned more than a hundred cows he was obliged, nevertheless, to buy butter, which suggests an experience not unknown to gentlemen farmers of any period, and also that company was never lacking in that generous, open house overlooking the Potomac.

*George Washington, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. I, p. 112.*

### A Facetious Letter

President Taft said in the course of his speech to the Jerseymen on Washington's birthday that he was not keen to institute comparisons between the first President and his successors, but there was one thing he should like to know,

and that was whether Mr. Washington had a sense of humor. He had never seen any evidences of it. We commend to the President's attention the following illuminating document now in the possession of Mr. Julian E. Ingle, Jr., of this city, who is a great-great-great-nephew of both George and Martha:

Mount Vernon, 28th August, 1762.

*Dear Sir:*—I was favoured with your Epistle wrote on a certain 25th of July, when you ought to have been at Church, praying as becomes every good Christian Man who has as much to answer for as you have—strange it is that you will be so blind to truth that the enlightning sounds of the Gospel cannot reach your Ear, nor no Examples awaken you to a sense of Goodness—could you but behold with what religious zeal I hye me to Church on every Lord's day, it would do your heart good, and fill it, I hope, with equal fervency—but hark'ee—I am told you have lately introduced into your Family, a certain production which you are lost in admiration of, and spend so much time in contemplating the just proportions of its parts, the ease, and conveniences with which it abounds, that it is thought you will have little time to animadvert upon the prospect of your Crops, &c., pray how will this be reconciled to that anxious care and vigilance, which is so escencially necessary at a time when our growing Property—meaning the Tobacco—is assailed by every villainous worm that has had an existence since the days of Noah (how unkind it was of that Noah, now I have mentioned his name, to suffer such a brood of Vermin to get a birth in the Ark) but perhaps you may be as well of as we are—that is, have no Tobacco for them to eat, and there I think we nicked the Dogs, as I think to do you if you expect any more—but without a full assurance of being with a very sincere regard,

D Sir, Yr Mo Affect. & Obed.,

G<sup>o</sup>. WASHINGTON.

P. S. don't forget to make my Compl's. to Mrs. Bassett,

Miss Dudy, and the little ones, for Miss Dudy cannot be classed with small People without offering her great injustice. I shall see you, I expect, about the first of November.

To Coln Bassett, at Eltham.

The "new production" mentioned in the letter was a son and heir over whose birth Colonel Bassett was rejoicing. "Miss Dudy" was Miss Judy Diggs, the daughter of a neighboring farmer. Miss Judy's physical prowess was famous, and on one occasion, which Washington doubtless remembered, she had beaten a valiant youth of the community in a wrestling bout.

*Harper's Weekly*, March 5, 1910, p. 5.

### **A Manly, Wholesome, Many-sided Life**

Take it for all in all, it was a manly, wholesome, many-sided life. It kept Washington young and strong, both mentally and physically. When he was forty he flung the iron bar, at some village sports, to a point which no competitor could approach. There was no man in all Virginia who could ride a horse with such a powerful and assured seat. There was no man who could journey farther on foot, and no man at Williamsburg who showed at the governor's receptions such a commanding presence, or who walked with such a strong and elastic step. As with the body, so with the mind. He never rusted. A practical carpenter and smith, he brought the same quiet intelligence and firm will to the forging of iron or the felling and sawing of trees that he had displayed in fighting France. The life of a country gentleman did not dull or stupefy him, or lead him to gross indulgences. He remained well-made and athletic, strong and enduring, keen in perception and in sense, and warm in his feelings and affections. Many men would have become heavy and useless in these years of quiet country life, but Washington simply ripened and, like all slowly maturing men, grew stronger, abler, and

wiser in the happy years of rest and waiting which intervened between youth and middle age.

*George Washington*, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. I, p. 114.

### The Outer Man

Writing to his London tailor for clothes, in 1763, Washington directed him to "take measure of a gentleman who wares well-made cloaths of the following size: to wit, 6 feet high and proportionably made—if anything rather slender than thick, for a person of that highth, with pretty long arms and thighs. You will take care to make the breeches longer than those you sent me last, and I would have you keep the measure of the cloaths you now make, and if any alteration is required in my next it shall be pointed out." About this time too, he ordered "6 pr. Man's riding Gloves—rather large than the middle size,"

and several dozen pairs of stockings, "to be long, and tolerably large."

The earliest known description of Washington was written in 1760 by his companion-in-arms and friend George Mercer, who attempted a "portraiture" in the following words: "He may be described as being straight as an Indian measuring six feet two inches in his stockings, and weighing 175 pounds when he took his seat in the House of Burgesses in 1759. His frame is padded with well-developed muscles, indicating great strength. His bones and joints are large, as are his feet and hands. He is wide shouldered, but has not a deep or round chest; is neat waisted, but is broad across the hips, and has rather long legs and arms. His head is well shaped though not large, but is gracefully poised on a superb neck. A large and straight rather than a prominent nose; blue-gray penetrating eyes, which are widely separated and overhung by a heavy brow. His face is long rather than broad, with high round cheek bones, and terminates in a good firm chin. He has a clear though rather a colorless pale



skin, which burns with the sun. A pleasing, benevolent, though a commanding countenance, dark brown hair, which he wears in a cue. His mouth is large and generally firmly closed, but which from time to time discloses some defective teeth. His features are regular and placid, though flexible and expressive of deep feeling when moved by emotion. In conversation he looks you full in the face, is deliberate, deferential and engaging. His demeanor at all times composed and dignified. His movements and gestures are graceful, his walk majestic, and he is a splendid horseman."

*The True George Washington*, Paul Leicester Ford, p. 38.

### Social Diversions and the Dismal Swamp Company

There is a series of notes in one of the diaries, describing the continued festivities, day after day, when the British frigate *Boston* arrived in the river just in front of Belvoir. Sir Thomas Adams was the commander. The officers were made at home in Mount Vernon and at Belvoir. Breakfast parties and dinner parties varied the ordinary life, and on board the frigate there were occasional tea parties. Washington, the Fairfaxes, and the other rich planters on the Potomac had beautiful barges, which had been built for them in England, and these barges were manned by negroes in uniform, with the neatness and precision of the navy or of our best modern boatmen. . . .

They were not far from Annapolis, and he and Mrs. Washington would visit that capital when the Legislature was in session, meeting an elegant, though not very large society. There were dinners and balls during the session, and occasional efforts at theatricals. Washington was always fond of the theatre; but in his day he had few opportunities for gratifying this taste. He danced at balls, and though the tradition is that he was a ceremonious and grave partner, that tradition probably belongs rather to a later period than to these days of his early marriage. Among the articles imported for his wife and her daughter, masks are mentioned.

He engaged himself, with other men of enterprise in his neighborhood, in a plan to drain the great Dismal Swamp in Southern Virginia. He explored it personally, both on horseback, as far as that was possible, and on foot where he could not press his horse. At the next session of the Virginia Legislature, the company, in behalf of which he had visited it, was chartered under the name of the "Dismal Swamp Company." With the work of that company the operations which have gone forward from time to time to improve that region practically began.

*The Life of George Washington, Studied Anew*, Edward Everett Hale, p. 128.

Treaty of peace between English and French....	1763
Pontiac War.....	1763
Stamp Act passed by Parliament.....	1765
Stamp Act repealed.....	1766
Declaratory Act passed.....	1766
Duty on tea, glass, paints and paper.....	1767
English troops sent to Boston.....	1768
So-called "Boston Massacre" .....	March 3, 1770



*From a Miniature by J. De Mare.*

COLONEL WASHINGTON



## CHAPTER XI

### THE VIRGINIA COLONEL AND THE COMING CONFLICT

#### The Stamp Act and Patrick Henry

From 1763, when the torment began, to 1774, only one year before Washington took command of the Continental army, he was as staunch a loyalist as could be found in England. Not once in all this time, however, did he under-rate the mischievous influence of any of England's injudicious efforts. As early as 1763, when the English Board of Trade ordered that colonial paper money, a small quantity of which had been issued during the French and Indian war, should be no longer a legal tender, he expressed the fear that the order "would set the whole country in flames," and when the Stamp Act was passed he wrote that there were many cogent reasons why it would prove ineffectual. He was also one of the first to predict that import duties, for revenue, would induce frugality in America and injure British manufactures.

Irving aptly says it was ominous that the first burst of opposition (by a representative body) to the Stamp Act should take place in Virginia, for this colony had been marked above all others for its sympathy for the mother country. The act was passed by Parliament in March, 1765; two months later, in the House of Burgesses, of which Washington was a member, Patrick Henry presented the famous resolutions declaring that Virginia's General Assembly had the exclusive right and power to tax the inhabitants of the colony, and that whoever maintained the contrary was Virginia's enemy; it was at the close of his speech supporting these resolutions that Henry drew the startling parallels which have been repeated countless millions of

times on school-room platforms. The resolutions, slightly changed in form but with all of their original spirit, were passed, the frightened Lieutenant-Governor dissolved the Assembly and ordered a new election, and Virginia jumped ahead a century within twenty-four hours.

The stamped paper, when it arrived, was treated with that peculiar quality of deference that is usually accorded to smallpox. Nobody wanted it, and those who had it kept it out of sight. As no legal papers were valid unless written upon it, the courts closed their doors, to the delight of all sinners except lawyers. The day on which the act went into operation was observed throughout the country as a day of mourning, the only festivities being the hanging or burning in effigy of the promoters of the act. Three months of this sort of thing convinced Parliament of its mistake, so it could not have been so remarkably stupid a body after all. . . . The act was repealed in the fourth month of its operation, to the great delight of all America, and of Washington, who had feared that its enforcement "would have been more direful than is generally apprehended, both to the mother country and her colonies."

*George Washington, John Habberton, p. 66.*

### **The Grand Sachem's Prophecy**

In the year 1772, Col. Washington, accompanied by Dr. Craik and a considerable party of hunters, woodsmen and others, proceeded to Kanawha, with a view to explore the country, and make surveys of extensive and valuable tracts of land. At that time the Kanawha was several hundred miles remote from the frontier settlements, and only accessible by Indian paths, which wound through the passes of the mountains.

One day, when resting in the camp from the fatigues attendant on so arduous an enterprise, a party of Indians were discovered approaching, led by a trader. They halted at a short distance, and the interpreter advancing,

declared that he was conducting a party, which consisted of a grand sachem and some attendant warriors; that the chief was a very great man among the northwestern tribes, and the same who commanded the Indians on the fall of Braddock, sixteen years before; that hearing of the visit of Col. Washington to the western country, this chief set out on a mission, the object of which himself would make known.

The colonel received the ambassador with courtesy, and having put matters in the camp in the best possible order for the reception of such distinguished visitors, which so short a notice would allow, the strangers were introduced. Among the colonists were some fine, tall, and manly figures, but as soon as the sachem approached, he in a moment pointed out the hero of the Monongahela amid the group, although sixteen years had elapsed since he had seen him, and then only in the tumult of the battle. The Indian was of lofty stature, and of a dignified and imposing appearance.

The council fire was kindled, when the grand sachem addressed our Washington to the following effect:—

"I am a chief, and the ruler over many tribes. My influence extends to the waters of the Great Lakes, and to the far Blue Mountains. I have travelled a long and a weary path, that I might see the young warrior of the great battle. It was on the day that the white man's blood mixed with the streams of our forest, that I first beheld this chief. I called to my young men and said, 'Mark yon tall and daring warrior; he is not of the red-coat tribe; he hath an Indian's wisdom, and his warriors fight as well; himself alone is exposed. Quick, let your aim be certain, and he dies.' Our rifles were levelled—rifles which but for him knew not how to miss. 'Twas all in vain; a power mightier far than we shielded him from harm. He cannot die in battle. I am old, and soon shall be gathered to the great council fire of my fathers in the land of the shades;

but ere I go, there is a something bids me speak in the voice of prophecy. Listen! The Great Spirit protects that man and guides his destinies. He will become the chief of nations, and a people yet unborn hail him as the founder of a mighty empire."

*Entertaining Anecdotes of Washington* (Boston, 1833), p. 49.

### "Our Lordly Masters in Great Britain"

Washington . . . was growing exceedingly impatient of English misrule, and saw clearly to what it was leading. "At a time," he says, "when our lordly masters in Great Britain will be satisfied with nothing less than the deprivation of American freedom, it seems highly necessary that something should be done to avert the stroke, and maintain the liberty which we have derived from our ancestors. But the manner of doing it to answer the purpose effectually is the point in question. That no man should scruple, or hesitate a moment, to use arms in defense of so valuable a blessing, is clearly my opinion. Yet arms, I would beg leave to add, should be the last resort. We have already, it is said, proved the inefficacy of addresses to the throne, and remonstrances to Parliament. How far, then, their attention to our rights and privileges is to be awakened or alarmed by starving their trade and manufactures remains to be tried."

He took the lead in forming an association in Virginia, and he kept scrupulously to his agreement; for when he sent his orders to London, he was very careful to instruct his correspondents to send him none of the goods unless the Act of Parliament had meantime been repealed. As the times grew more exciting, Washington watched events steadily. He took no step backward, but he moved forward deliberately and with firmness. He did not allow himself to be carried away by the passions of the time. It was all very well, some said, to stop buying from England, but let us stop selling also. They need our tobacco. Suppose



we refuse to send it unless Parliament repeals the act. Washington stood out against that except as a final resource, and for the reason which he stated in a letter:—

“I am convinced, as much as I am of my own existence, that there is no relief for us but in their distress; and I think, at least I hope, that there is public virtue enough left among us to deny ourselves everything but the bare necessities of life to accomplish this end. This we have a right to do, and no power on earth can compel us to do otherwise, till it has first reduced us to the most abject state of slavery. The stopping of our exports would, no doubt, be a shorter method than the other to effect this purpose; but if we owe money to Great Britain, nothing but the last necessity can justify the non-payment of it; and, therefore, I have great doubts upon this head, and wish to see the other method first tried, which is legal and will facilitate these payments.”

*George Washington, an Historical Biography, Horace E. Scudder, p. 128.*

### **“Catch a Man before You Hang Him”**

One of the earliest and most vigorous responses to the oppressions of the Stamp Act and the revenue collectors came from Captain Abraham Whipple of Providence, Rhode Island. As captain of a small ship bearing the appropriate name of the *Gamecock* he captured twenty-three French merchant vessels, during the French and Indian war. On one of Whipple's cruises to the West Indies his little ship was caught in a gale, and it became necessary to throw overboard the guns and heaviest cannon balls. Just after this a huge French ship hove in sight. Too much disabled to cope with such an enemy, Whipple resorted to stratagem. He cut up a spar into short lengths, painted them black like cannon and stuck them out at the porthole. He ordered the crew to put their caps on the ends of hand-spikes and set them up to look like crew all ready to fire the guns. With this harmless equipment, Whipple bore boldly down

upon the French privateer, which put about and soon sailed out of sight.

Captain Whipple was soon given charge of a company of eighty volunteers who went out in rowboats to the *Gaspée*, a British revenue ship. He announced that he had come to arrest Lieutenant Duddington, boarded the *Gaspée*, took Duddington and his men prisoners and burned the obnoxious craft at the water's edge. The cool daring of this act enraged the British. Captain Wallace, who commanded another British ship, wrote to Captain Whipple as follows:

"You, Abraham Whipple, on the 17th day of June, 1772, burned his Majesty's vessel, the *Gaspée*, and I will hang you at yard's arm."

Whipple's reply was characteristic:

*To Sir James Wallace, Sir:*

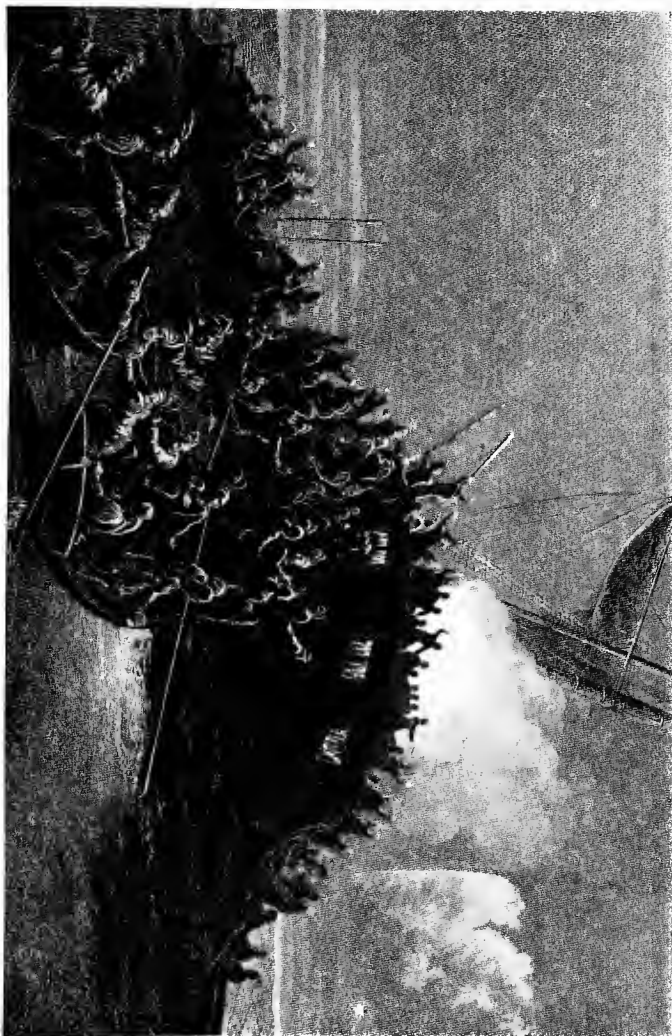
"Always catch a man before you hang him.

"ABRAHAM WHIPPLE."

*The Story of the Liberty Bell, Wayne Whipple, p. 95.*

### Feasting and Fasting

When the Virginia Assembly met again, they proceeded to congratulate the governor on the arrival of Lady Dunmore, and then suddenly, as all was flowing smoothly along, there came a letter through the corresponding committee which Washington had helped to establish, telling of the measures against Boston. Everything else was thrown aside at once, a vigorous protest was entered on the journal of the House, and June 1st, when the Port Bill was to go into operation, was appointed a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer. The first result was prompt dissolution of the assembly. The next was another meeting in the long room of the Raleigh tavern, where the Boston bill was denounced, non-importation was renewed, and the committee of correspondence instructed to take steps for calling a general congress. Events were beginning to move at last with



ABRAHAM WHIPPLE ATTACKS THE "CASPEE"



perilous rapidity. Washington dined with Lord Dunmore on the evening of that day, rode with him, and appeared at her ladyship's ball the next night. It was not his way to bite his thumb at men with whom he differed politically, nor to call the motives of his opponents in question. But when the 1st of June arrived, he noted in his diary that he fasted all day and attended the appointed services. He always meant what he said, being of a simple nature, and when he fasted and prayed there was something ominously earnest about it, something that his excellency the governor, who liked the society of this agreeable man and wise counsellor, would have done well to consider and draw conclusions from, and which he probably did not heed at all. He might well have reflected, as he undoubtedly failed to do, that when men of the George Washington type fast and pray on account of political misdoings, it is well for their opponents to look to it carefully.

*George Washington*, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. I, p. 119.

### Washington Presents Resolutions

England could prevent ships entering or leaving the port of Boston, but she could not control patriotic sympathy, which hurried from every part of the country to the relief of the beleaguered Yankees. One of the first results was the first Continental Congress in which all the colonies were represented. This Congress, which convened in the autumn of 1774, was composed of Englishmen as loyal as those who wrung Magna Charta from King John, but it asserted the right of the colonists, as British subjects, to make their own laws and impose their own taxes; it asserted the right to trial by jury, the right of petition, and the wrong of being annoyed by royal troops. It drafted a petition to the King, and addresses to the people of England, Canada and America, and then adjourned to meet again in the spring of 1775, should harmony not have been restored by that time.

Washington was a delegate to this Congress, and an affectionate subject of King George, but he was not a fool. A year earlier, in reply to a suggestion of his friend Bryan Fairfax, brother of his older friend the old Earl, that the colonies should petition the throne, he distinctly declared that there had already been petitions as good as any new ones that could be manufactured, . . . and . . . implied that if the petitions already sent were unproductive, there was no sense in wasting any more paper and ink. Still, he voted with his friends, did all he could to avert harm, and then and afterward . . . did all that could be done by a loyal Englishman who did not forget that he was an honest man. Before the Congress met he presided at a county political meeting that prepared a set of resolutions which were extremely loyal, but which, nevertheless, reminded the English Government that from the sovereign there was but one appeal.

These resolutions were presented by Washington in person at a general convention of Virginians, and in supporting them the quiet, self-contained young delegate astonished all of his associates by an outburst of eloquence that must have come from the heart, for he concluded by expressing his readiness to raise and equip a thousand men, at his own expense, and march to the relief of Boston against the British General Gage, who was infesting and annoying the city with a large force of British regulars.

*George Washington, John Habberton, p. 70.*

### **"More Becoming a Turkish Bashaw"**

The meeting of Fairfax County was held in due course, and Washington presided. The usual resolutions for self-government and against the vindictive Massachusetts measures were adopted. Union and non-importation were urged; and then the congress, which they advocated, was recommended to address a petition and remonstrance to the king, and ask him to reflect that "from our sovereign

there can be but one appeal." Everything was to be tried, everything was to be done, but the ultimate appeal was never lost sight of where Washington appeared, and the final sentence of these Fairfax County resolves is very characteristic of the leader in the meeting. Two days later he wrote to the worthy and still remonstrating Bryan Fairfax, repeating and enlarging his former questions, and adding: "Has not General Gage's conduct since his arrival, in stopping the address of his council, and publishing a proclamation more becoming to a Turkish bashaw than an English governor, declaring it treason to associate in any manner by which the commerce of Great Britain is to be affected,—has not this exhibited an unexampled testimony of the most despotic system of tyranny that ever was practised in a free government? . . . Shall we after this whine and cry for relief, when we have already tried it in vain? Or shall we supinely sit and see one province after another fall a sacrifice to despotism?" The fighting spirit of the man was rising. There was no rash rushing forward, no ignorant shouting for war, no blinking of the real issue, but a foresight that nothing could dim, and a perception of facts which nothing could confuse.

*George Washington*, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. I, p. 122.

### The Silent Man Becomes Eloquent

On August 1st Washington was at Williamsburg, to represent his country in the meeting of representatives from all Virginia. The convention passed resolutions like the Fairfax resolves, and chose delegates to a general congress. The silent man was now warming into action. He "made the most eloquent speech that ever was made," and said, "I will raise a thousand men, subsist them at my own expense, and march them to the relief of Boston." He was capable, it would seem, of talking to the purpose with some fire and force, for all he was so quiet and so retiring. When there was anything to say, he could say it so that it

stirred all who listened, because they felt that there was a mastering strength behind the words. He faced the terrible issue solemnly and firmly, but his blood was up, the fighting spirit in him was aroused, and the convention chose him as one of Virginia's six delegates to the Continental Congress. He lingered long enough to make a few preparations at Mount Vernon. He wrote another letter to Fairfax, interesting to us as showing the keenness with which he read in the meagre news-reports the character of Gage and of the opposing people of Massachusetts. Then he started for the North to take the first step in the long and difficult path that lay before him.

*George Washington*, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. I, p. 123.

### **"An Innate Spirit of Freedom"**

To his friend Bryan Fairfax, who, although a fine fellow and a Liberal in politics, was first of all an Englishman instead of an American, Washington wrote "*an innate spirit of freedom* first told me that the measures which the administration have for some time been and now are violently pursuing, are opposed to every principle of natural justice." To an old friend and comrade, Captain Mackenzie, now with Gage in Boston, he wrote in 1774 that, while none of the colonies desired independence, "this you may at the same time rely on, that none of them will ever submit to the loss of their valuable rights and privileges."

In the same year he offered to accept the command of a single Virginia company, should occasion require it to be called out, and he wrote his brother that "it is my full intention if needful, to devote my life and fortune to the cause." To George William Fairfax in England, he wrote early in 1775 that war was a sad alternative, "but can a virtuous man hesitate in his choice?" His eloquence in supporting the Fairfax county resolutions, and his announcement that he was willing to raise and equip at his own expense a thousand men and lead them to Boston, have



already been alluded to, and yet during all this time there did not exist a more loyal subject of England. Botecourt and Dunmore, who were the royal governors in Virginia during the troublous time that gave the province a governor of her own, found in Washington hearty personal friendship and invaluable assistance at all duties that did not conflict with provincial rights. The famous Fairfax county resolutions with which his name is identified, claimed that those who signed them were Englishmen, and to Mackenzie he wrote, concerning independence, "I am satisfied that no such thing is desired by any thinking man in North America."

*George Washington, John Habberton, p. 76*

### **"An Appeal to Arms and the God of Hosts"**

I think that winter and spring of 1775 must have been a somewhat sorrowful one to George Washington, and that he must have felt as if a great change were coming into his life. His wife's daughter had died, and he missed her sadly. Young John Custis had married and gone away to live. The sound of war was heard on all sides, and among the visitors to Mount Vernon were some who afterward were to be generals in the American army. He still rode occasionally after the hounds, but the old days of fun were gone. George Fairfax had gone back to England, and the jolly company at Belvoir was scattered. The house itself there had caught fire and burned to the ground.

But the time for action was at hand. Washington turned from his home and his fox-hunting to go to Richmond as a delegate to a second Virginia convention. It was called to hear the reports of the delegates to Philadelphia and to see what further was to be done. It was clear to some, and to Washington among them, that the people must be ready for the worst. They had shown themselves in earnest by all the training they had been going through as independent companies. Now let those companies be

formed into a real army. It was idle to send any more petitions to the king.

"We must fight!" exclaimed Patrick Henry; "I repeat it, sir; we must fight! An appeal to arms and the God of Hosts is all that is left us!"

A committee, of which Washington was one, was appointed to report a plan for an army of Virginia.

But when people make up their minds to fight, they know very well, if they are sensible, that more than half the task before them is to find means for feeding and clothing not only the troops but the people who are dependent on the troops. Therefore the convention appointed another committee, of which Washington was also a member, to devise a plan for encouraging manufactures, so that the people could do without England. Heretofore, the Virginians had done scarcely any manufacturing; nearly everything they needed they had bought from England, with tobacco. But if they were to be at war with England, they must be making ready to provide for themselves. It was late in the day to do anything; slavery, though they did not then see it clearly, had made a variety of industries impossible. However, the people were advised to form associations to promote the raising of wool, cotton, flax, and hemp, and to encourage the use of home manufactures.

Washington was again chosen one of the delegates to the Continental Congress, for the second Congress had been called to meet at Philadelphia. He was even readier to go than before. On the day when he was chosen, he wrote to his brother, John Augustine Washington:

"It is my full intention to devote my life and fortune to the cause we are engaged in, if needful."

*George Washington, an Historical Biography, Horace E. Scudder, p. 138.*

### **"A Mere Potomac Planter"**

"How are you, Hugh?" This was the Master of the Rolls, Mr. John Morris. Then my aunt said, "Go and

speak to the ladies—you know them”; and as I turned aside, “I beg pardon, Sir William; this is my nephew, Hugh Wynne.” This was addressed to a high-coloured personage in yellow velvet with gold buttons, and a white flowered waistcoat, and with his queue in a fine hair net.

“This is Sir William Draper, Hugh; he who took Manila, as you must know.” . . . The famous soldier smiled as I saluted him with my best bow.

“Fine food for powder, Mistress Wynne, and already sixteen! I was in service three years earlier. Should he wish for an ensign’s commission, I am at your service.”

“Ah, Sir William, that might have been, a year or so ago, but now he may have to fight General Gage.”

“The gods forbid! Our poor general!”

“Mistress Wynne is a rank Whig,” put in Mrs. Ferguson. “She reads Dickinson’s ‘Farmer’s Letters,’ and all the wicked treason of that man Adams.”

“A low demagogue!” cried Mrs. Galloway. “I hear there have been disturbances in Boston, and that because one James Otis has been beaten by our officers, and because our bands play ‘Yankee Doodle’ on Sundays in front of the churches—I beg pardon, the meetings—Mr. Robinson, the king’s collector, has had to pay and apologize. Most shameful it is!”

“I should take short measures,” said the sailor.

“And I,” said Etherington. “I have just come from Virginia, but not a recruit could I get. It is like a nest of ants in a turmoil, and the worst of all are the officers who served in the French war. There is, too, a noisy talker, Patrick Henry, and a Mr. Washington.”

“I think it was he who saved the wreck of the king’s army under Mr. Braddock,” said my aunt. “I can remember how they all looked. Not a wig among them. The lodges must have been full of them, but their legs saved their scalps.”

“Is it for this that they call them wigwams?” cries naughty Miss Chew. . . .

"A mere Potomac planter," said Etherington, "'pon my soul—and with such airs, as if they were gentlemen of the line." . . . "I have served the king as well as I know how, and I trust, madam, I shall have the pleasure to aid in the punishment of some of these insolent rebels."

*Hugh Wynne: Free Quaker, S. Weir Mitchell, M.D., LL.D., p. 71.*

### In Front of Carpenters' Hall

At half-past ten we drove down Second street and up Chestnut, where was a great crowd come to look on. Dr. Rush, seeing my aunt's chariot, got in at Second street, and, being one of the members, enabled us to get near to Carpenters' Alley, where, at the far end, back from the street, is the old building in which the Congress was to be held. . . . I think none had a better view than we. Andrew Allen came to speak to us, and then Mr. Galloway, not yet scared by the extreme measures of which few as yet dreamed, and which by and by drove these and many other gentlemen into open declarations for the crown. . . . Here and there militia uniforms were seen amid the dull grays, the smocks of farmers and mechanics, and the sober suits of tradesmen, all come to see.

The Rev. Dr. Duché passed us. . . . He was to make this day the famous prayer which so moved Mr. Adams. And later, I may add, he went over to the other side. Soon others came. Some we knew not, but the great Dr. Rush pointed out such as were of his acquaintance.

"There," he said, "is Carter Braxton. He tells me he does not like the New England men—either their religion or their manners; and I like them both." . . . "There is the great Virginia orator, Mr. Patrick Henry," said the doctor. He was in simple dress, and looked up at us curiously, as he went by with Pendleton and Mr. Carroll. "He has a great estate—Mr. Carroll," said the doctor. "I wonder he will risk it." He was dressed in brown silk breeches, with a yellow figured waistcoat, and, like many

of them, wore his sword. Mr. Franklin had not yet come home, and some were late.

Presently the doctor called, and a man in the military dress of the Virginia militia turned toward us. "Colonel Washington," said the doctor, "will permit me to present him to a lady, a great friend of liberty. Mistress Wynne, Colonel Washington."

"I have already had the honor," he said, taking off his hat—a scrolled beaver.

"He is our best soldier, and we are fortunate that he is with us," said the doctor, as the colonel moved away.

The doctor changed his mind later, and helped, I fear, to make the trouble which came near to costing Conway his life. I have always been a great admirer of fine men, and as the Virginia colonel moved like Saul above the crowd, an erect, well-proportioned figure, he looked taller than he really was, but, as my aunt had said, was not of the bigness of my father.

"He has a good nose," said my Aunt Gainor, perhaps conscious of her own possession in the way of a nasal organ, and liking to see it as notable in another; "but how sedate he is! I find Mr. Peyton Randolph more agreeable, and there is Mr. Robert Morris—and John Dickinson."

Then John Adams went by, deep in talk with Roger Sherman, whom I thought shabbily dressed; and behind them Robert Livingston, whom my aunt knew. Thus it was, as I am glad to remember, that I beheld these men who were to be the makers of an empire. Perhaps no wiser group of people ever met for a greater fate, and surely the hand of God was seen in the matter; for what other colony—Canada, for example,—had such men to show? There, meanwhile, was England, with its great nobles and free commons and a splendid story of hard-won freedom, driving madly on its way of folly and defeat.

Of what went on within the hall we heard little. A declaration of rights was set forth, committees of corre-

spondence appointed, and addresses issued to the king and people of Great Britain. Congress broke up, and the winter went by; Gage was superseded by Sir William Howe; Clinton and Burgoyne were sent out, and ten thousand men were ordered to America to aid the purposes of the king.

*Hugh Wynne: Free Quaker, S. Weir Mitchell, M.D., LL.D., p. 198.*

### **"A Brother's Sword Sheathed in a Brother's Breast"**

Thus the winter wore away; spring opened, and toward the end of April Washington started again for the North, much occupied with certain tidings from Lexington and Concord which just then spread over the land. He saw all that it meant plainly enough, and after noting the fact that the colonists fought and fought well, he wrote to George Fairfax in England: "Unhappy it is to reflect that a brother's sword has been sheathed in a brother's breast, and that the once happy and peaceful plains of America are either to be drenched in blood or inhabited by slaves. Sad alternative. But can a virtuous man hesitate in his choice?" Congress, it would seem, thought there was a good deal of room for hesitation, both for virtuous men and for others, and after the fashion of their race determined to do a little more debating and arguing, before taking any decisive step. After much resistance and discussion, a second "humble and dutiful petition" to the king was adopted, and with strange contradiction a confederation was formed at the same time, and Congress proceeded to exercise the sovereign powers thus vested in them. The most pressing and troublesome question before them was what to do with the army surrounding Boston, and with the actual hostilities there existing.

Washington, for his part, went quietly about as before, saying nothing and observing much, working hard as chairman of the military committees, planning for defense, and arranging for raising an army. One act of his alone stands out for us with significance at this critical time. In this second Congress he appeared habitually on the floor in



*From the Original by Alonzo Chappel.*

"THE EMBATTLED FARMERS" ON CONCORD BRIDGE





his blue and buff uniform of a Virginia colonel. It was his way of saying that the hour for action had come, and that he at least was ready for the fight whenever called upon.

*George Washington*, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. I, p. 129.

### The News Received in Philadelphia

The cold season was soon upon us, and the eventful year of '75 came, but with no great change for me and those I loved. A sullen rage possessed the colonies, and especially Massachusetts, where the Regulation Acts were quietly disregarded. No counsellors or jurymen would serve under the king's commission. The old muskets of the French and Indian wars were taken from the corners and put in order. Men drilled, and women cast bullets.

Failing to corrupt Samuel Adams and Hancock, Gage resolved to arrest them at Concord and to seize on the stores of powder and ball. "The heads of traitors will soon decorate Temple Bar," said a London gazette; and so the march of events went on. In the early spring Dr. Franklin came home in despair of accommodation; he saw nothing now to do but to fight, and this he told us plainly. His very words were in my mind on the night of April 23d of this year of '75, as I was slowly and thoughtfully walking over the bridge where Walnut crossed the Dock Creek, and where I stayed for a moment to strike flint and steel in order to light my pipe. Of a sudden I heard a dull but increasing noise to north, and then the strong voice of the bell in the state-house. It was not ringing for fire. Somewhat puzzled I walked swiftly to Second street, where were men and women in groups. I stopped a man and asked what had chanced. He said, "A battle! a battle! and General Gage killed." Couriers had reached the coffee-houses, but no one on the street seemed to have more than this vague information; all were going toward Chestnut street, where a meeting was to be held, as I learned, and perhaps fuller news given out.

*Hugh Wynne: Free Quaker*, S. Weir Mitchell, M.D., LL.D., p. 20.

### Lee and Gates Visit Mount Vernon

When Congress adjourned, Washington returned to Mount Vernon, to the pursuits and pleasures that he loved, to his family and farm, and to his horses and his hounds, with whom he had many a good run, the last that he was to enjoy for years to come. He returned also to watch and wait as before, and to see war rapidly gather in the east. When the Virginia Convention again assembled, resolutions were introduced to arm and discipline men. . . . Washington said nothing, but he served on the committee to draft a plan of defense, and then fell to reviewing the independent companies which were springing up everywhere. . . . At Mount Vernon his old comrades of the French war began to appear, in search of courage and sympathy. Thither, too, came Charles Lee, a typical military adventurer of that period, a man of English birth and of varied service, brilliant, whimsical, and unbalanced. There also came Horatio Gates, likewise British, and disappointed with his prospects at home; less adventurous than Lee, but also less brilliant, and not much more valuable.

*George Washington*, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. I, p. 129.

### "I Now Nominate George Washington, of Virginia"

One morning in June, not long before the hour when the Congress was to assemble, John Adams was walking up and down the street in front of the building in which the meeting was to be held. His hands were clasped behind his back, and his head was bowed so that it was evident he was seriously troubled.

His meditations were interrupted by the approach of his cousin Samuel Adams, who, as he hailed him, said, "What is the topic with you this morning?"

"Oh, the army, the army!" replied John Adams. "I am determined to go into the hall this morning, and

enter upon a full detail of the state of the colonies, in order to show an absolute need of taking some decided steps. My whole aim shall be to induce Congress to appoint a day for adopting the army as the legal army of these United Colonies of North America, and then to hint at the election of a commander-in-chief."

"Well," said Samuel Adams, "I like that, Cousin John, but on whom have you fixed as that commander?"

"I will tell you. George Washington of Virginia, a member of this house."

"Oh, that will never do, never!" replied Samuel Adams, in surprise.

"It must do. It *shall* do, and for these reasons."

Then John Adams proceeded to call his cousin's attention to the exact condition of the country. For the success of the cause it was absolutely necessary that the middle and southern colonies should be heart and hand with the eastern. The American army was then at Cambridge, made up largely of New England men, and in the command of General Artemas Ward, himself a New Englander. Already some of the men from other sections of the country were holding back and protesting against the prominence the New England men were taking, and apparently were disposed to hold. As a means of keeping all together, the only course seemed to lie in the selection of a commander-in-chief from outside the eastern colonies, thereby uniting all sections in one body, a body that John Adams declared would then be irresistible.

Samuel Adams listened thoughtfully to his cousin's words, and then suggested that the devotion of the eastern men to General Ward would be a serious obstacle to such a selection. He recounted the distinguished services of Artemas Ward, his scholarship (he was a graduate of Harvard), his success in the French and Indian War, and the esteem in which he was held by all who knew him. He also referred to the well-known fact that John Hancock desired the position for himself.

John Hancock's claims were lightly put aside by John Adams, who had slight love for his colleague, as is well known. Then he willingly assented to all that his cousin had said in favor of Artemas Ward, but still clung to his purpose to have the Virginia colonel selected for the position. He referred to the remarkable services Washington had rendered in the wars of the colony, his well-balanced mind and large experience for so young a man, which more than atoned for his lack of training in the schools, and to the marked confidence which the people of all parts of the country had in his integrity and manhood.

After a further conversation Samuel Adams promised to "second the motion," and both men entered the hall where the assembly had now convened. John Adams soon took the floor and, in one of his most impassioned speeches, urged the adoption of the army by the Continental Congress. He himself was ready, he declared, "to arm the army, appoint a commander, vote supplies, and proceed to business."

Fears and objections were raised by some of his more timid hearers, and then, with a warmth he could not conceal, John Adams again rose and said: "Gentlemen, if this Congress will not adopt this army, before ten moons have set, New England will adopt it, and she will undertake the struggle alone! Yes, with a strong arm and a clear conscience she will front the foe single-handed!"

His burning words swept away all opposition, the time for the vote was fixed, and then after a heated debate the army was adopted by Congress.

The next problem was the election of a commander for the army, which now was no longer a "mob of rebels," but belonged to the United Colonies of North America; and naturally all looked again to John Adams to lead. And he was ready to lead, too.

On the appointed day he was in the assembly, and began his speech. First he entered into a description of

General Ward, and bestowed upon him such praise as must have satisfied even the warmest friends of the sturdy New England soldier. Then, drawing himself up to his full height, he paused for a moment before he added: "But this is *not* the man I have chosen!"

The scene was intensely dramatic, and the eyes of all the assembly were fixed upon the speaker. At his right was seated George Washington, clad in his uniform of a Virginia colonel, and he, too, was leaning forward with breathless interest, eager to hear the name of the man whom John Adams would propose.

More quietly, then, John Adams went on to portray the qualifications the new commander must have. Becoming more eloquent as his speech drew to an end, he closed with these words: "Gentlemen, I know these qualifications are high, but we all know they are needful in this crisis in this chief. Does any one say they are not to be obtained in this country? In reply, I have to say they are; they reside in one of our own body, and he is the man whom I now nominate,—GEORGE WASHINGTON OF VIRGINIA."

The startled Washington as he heard the words leaped to his feet and rushed into an adjoining room. The entire body sat silent and astonished. In the midst of the silence, Samuel Adams, acting on a promise he had previously given his cousin, rose, and moved for an adjournment, that time for consultation and deliberation might be had. The motion prevailed, and the assembly was dismissed.

*A Short History of the American Revolution*, Everett Tomlinson, p. 44.

### Colonel Washington Elected Commander-in-chief

Two days before the battle of Bunker Hill Congress formally adopted all the colonial troops that had been raised; and on the very day on which the Yankees started for Bunker Hill and a glorious history, Delegate Washington of the Continental Congress was informed of his unanimous election as commander-in-chief. Material from

which to make commanders was not at all scarce in the country at that time, for every man with a taste for war had enjoyed numerous chances for gratifying it during the many difficulties with French and Indians in the preceding twenty years. Ward, already in command of the Massachusetts troops, had seen hard service, and so had Israel Putnam. Schuyler, who needed only Washington's patience to be Washington's double, had fought the French and been carefully educated in military science. Greene, Pomeroy, Montgomery, Stark, and Prescott were not so prominent, but were all trusty fighters, while Charles Lee and Horatio Gates, both English soldiers, who had left their country for their country's good, were regarded with that adoring awe which twenty years ago characterized every American who gazed upon any foreigner who had ever worn a uniform. But Congress, though far,—very far,—from right in its impression that it knew everything, understood that ability to fight was not everything in war, and that the result of the conflict would depend largely upon the commander-in-chief's personal character. Washington's military record was known to all the members, and as for the man himself, he had sat among them in both sessions, and his intellectual and moral greatness had impressed themselves even upon the giants of whom the great Chatham spoke when he informed the House of Lords that "in the master States of the world I know not the people or senate who, in such a complication of difficult circumstances, can stand in preference to the delegates of America, assembled in General Congress in Philadelphia." Questioned about the same men individually, Patrick Henry, who was one of the delegates, said, "if you speak of solid information and sound judgment, Colonel Washington is unquestionably the greatest man on that floor."

*George Washington*, John Habberton, p. 75.

---

Washington's Commission as Commander-in-chief

## In Congress

*The delegates of the United Colonies of New-Hampshire, Massachusetts bay, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New-York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New Castle, Kent & Sussex on Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina*

To **George Washington** Esquire

**We** reposing especial trust and confidence in your patriotism, conduct and fidelity Do by these presents constitute and appoint you to be **General and Commander in Chief** of the Army of the United Colonies and of all the forces raised or to be raised by them and of all others who shall voluntary offer their service and join the said army for the defense of American Liberty and for repelling every hostile invasion thereof. AND you are hereby vested with full power and authority to act as you shall think for the good and welfare of the service.

**And** we do hereby strictly charge and require all officers and soldiers under your command to be obedient to your orders & and diligent in the exercise of their several duties.

**And** we do also enjoin and require you to be careful in executing the great trust reposed in you, by causing strict discipline and order to be observed in the army and that the soldiers are duly exercised and provided with all convenient necessaries.

**And** you are to regulate your conduct in every respect by the rules and discipline of war (as herewith given you) and punctually to observe and follow such orders and directions from time to time as you shall receive from this or a future Congress of the said United Colonies or a committee of Congress for that purpose appointed.







*Engraved by T. Phillips from the Painting by Alonzo Chappel.*

GEN. ETHAN ALLEN DEMANDS THE SURRENDER OF TICONDEROGA

"In the name of Jehovah and the Continental Congress!"



## CHAPTER XII

### COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF AND RAW RECRUITS

#### **"A Subject Which Fills Me with Inexpressible Concern"**

When Washington left Mount Vernon, in May, 1775, to attend the Continental Congress, he did not foresee his appointment as commander-in-chief, and as soon as it occurred he wrote his wife,—

"I am now set down to write to you on a subject which fills me with inexpressible concern, and this concern is greatly aggravated and increased, when I reflect upon the uneasiness I know it will give you. It has been determined in Congress, that the whole army raised for the defense of the American cause shall be put under my care, and that it is necessary for me to proceed immediately to Boston to take upon me the command of it.

"You may believe me my dear Patsy, when I assure you, in the most solemn manner, that, so far from seeking this appointment, I have used every endeavor in my power to avoid it, not only from my unwillingness to part with you and the family, but from a consciousness of its being a trust too great for my capacity, and that I should enjoy more real happiness in one month with you at home, than I have the most distant prospect of finding abroad, if my stay were to be seven times seven years. . . . I shall feel no pain from the toil and dangers of the campaign; my unhappiness will flow from the uneasiness I know you will feel from being left alone."

To prevent this loneliness as far as possible, he wrote at the same time to different members of the two families as follows:

"My great concern upon this occasion is, the thought of leaving your mother under the uneasiness which I fear this affair will throw her into; I therefore hope, expect, and indeed have no doubt, of your using every means in your power to keep up her spirits, by doing everything in your power to promote her quiet. I have, I must confess, very uneasy feelings on her account, but as it has been a kind of unavoidable necessity which has led me into this appointment, I shall more readily hope that success will attend it and crown our meetings with happiness."

"I entreat you and Mrs. Bassett if possible to visit at Mount Vernon, as also my wife's other friends. I could wish you to take her down, as I have no expectation of returning till winter and feel great uneasiness at her lonesome situation."

"I shall hope that my friends will visit and endeavor to keep up the spirits of my wife, as much as they can, as my departure will, I know, be a cutting stroke upon her; and on this account alone I have many very disagreeable sensations. I hope you and my sister, (although the distance is great), will find as much leisure this summer as to spend a little time at Mount Vernon."

*Writings of George Washington*, Edited by Lawrence B. Evans, Ph.D., p. 59.

### **Brave Exploits of Commodore Whipple**

The day that Washington was elected commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, Rhode Island purchased two sloops, the *Providence* and a smaller ship, and placed Abraham Whipple in charge of them to drive the British out of Narragansett Bay. He did this effectually with his little fleet. Abraham Whipple fired the first shot on the sea in the Revolution. He was recognized by the new government of the United States before John Paul Jones and thus became the first commodore of the American navy. Commodore Whipple's many daring exploits placed him beside Paul Jones as a Revolutionary hero. It is a

curious fortune of war that his brave deeds have been so seldom mentioned. It is sometimes stated that Whipple was in command of the disguised Indians of the Boston Tea Party, but he had nothing to do with that escapade. He conducted an exploit that required much more heroism and shrewdness. This was the passing of the British blockading fleet off the coast of Rhode Island, in 1778, carrying important despatches to France. He chose a stormy night in April for this dangerous undertaking. Commanding his little ship, the *Providence*, he hurled a defiant broadside at the British fleet as he passed through its lines. With a voice stronger than the gale, he gave loud commands to his men which confused the British, but he ordered the very opposite tactics in lower tones to his men. So the *Providence* escaped to France with the despatches to Dr. Franklin, John Adams and Arthur Lee, the American commissioners in Paris, who finally succeeded in enlisting the aid of the French for the American war for independence.

It was a strange looking navy of which Abraham Whipple was the first commodore. At his own expense he furnished uniforms for his crews. With the little *Providence* he patrolled the coast to defend the struggling commerce of the colonies against many and larger British ships. While in Massachusetts Bay he was ordered to intercept a fleet of one hundred and fifty vessels bound for the West Indies. Pretending to be a Halifax trader, he joined the fleet and by separating several ships every night from the rest, under the cover of darkness, he took possession of ten large vessels which he convoyed into Boston Harbor in triumph. These ships, laden with food and provisions, afforded great relief to the blockaded and nearly starved colony. His prize was valued at more than a million dollars.

*The Story of the Liberty Bell*, Wayne Whipple, p. 95.

### **"The Feeble Americans Could Scarce Keep up with Them!"**

After the tardy repeal of the obnoxious Stamp Act,

Franklin returned to America, in the spring of 1775. While he was crossing the Atlantic the

“Embattled farmers stood  
And fired the shot heard round the world.”

After reaching Philadelphia Franklin wrote to Edmund Burke, who was also friendly to the colonies:

“General Gage’s troops made a most vigorous retreat—twenty miles in three hours—scarce to be paralleled in history; the feeble Americans, who pelted them all the way [from Concord and Lexington] back to Boston could scarce keep up with them!”

While in London, Franklin explained the uprising of the American people with the proverb, “The waves never rise but when the winds blow.” He had so highly incensed the king and the ministry by his ardent advocacy of the people’s cause that they took the postmaster-generalship away from him. While the members of the English government were treating him to a variety of indignities, William Pitt, later made Earl of Chatham, referred to Franklin as “an honor not to the British nation only, but to human nature.”

From Philadelphia he wrote this famous letter to his friend Strahan in London:

“*Mr. Strahan:*

“You are a member of Parliament, and one of that majority which has doomed our country to destruction. You have begun to burn our towns and murder our people. Look upon your hands. They are stained with the blood of your relations! You and I were long friends; you are now my enemy, and

“I am

“Yours,

“B. FRANKLIN.”

### Few Men but Many Heroes

It was a bold stand which the hardy Americans had taken. If they had been thoroughly united themselves it would have been different, but the New England men had been so eager and determined that they had not waited for others to join them but had gone ahead on their own responsibility. In all the thirteen colonies the entire population was only about 2,600,000,\* and though this may seem like a very small number from which to draw forces to contend against King George, we must not forget that the people of Great Britain were also much fewer in number than they are to-day.

As soon as the result of the battle between the regulars and the minute-men was known, the angry colonies began to start for Boston to join their bold fellow-patriots. Israel Putnam had been ploughing in his fields at Pomfret, Connecticut, when the report came to him. Instantly abandoning his task he left word for the militia to follow him, and leaping upon the back of his horse he rode so swiftly on his journey of a hundred miles that in about eighteen hours he arrived at Cambridge, where the minute-men were assembled, at the same time when John Stark came down from New Hampshire with the first company of men from that colony. Benedict Arnold, who was then a captain, had taken sixty men from the assembly of students and people in New Haven, and soon he, too, was with the little patriot army. So from the farms and hill-sides, from the villages and hamlets, the angry colonists came, and in a very brief time General Gage and his soldiers found themselves besieged in Boston by an army that was

\*In 1775 the population of the thirteen colonies was said to be as follows:

Virginia,	560,000	New York,	180,000
Massachusetts,	360,000	New Jersey,	130,000
Pennsylvania,	300,000	New Hampshire,	80,000
North Carolina	260,000	Rhode Island,	50,000
Maryland,	220,000	Delaware,	40,000
Connecticut,	200,000	Georgia,	30,000
South Carolina,	180,000.		

made up of 16,000 rude and poorly equipped, but very determined men.

Apparently no one knew just what to do next. It was determined to hold the red-coats in the city, but what to expect, or what the next move was to be, there was no one to decide.

On the 10th of May two events occurred which did much to decide the future of the colonies, and of the war. One of these was the capture of Fort Ticonderoga by Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain Boys; and the other was the assembling of the Continental Congress in Philadelphia. The chief problem before the Congress was the relation of the colonies to the army, and the appointment of a commander-in-chief.

*A Short History of the American Revolution, Everett Tomlinson, p. 42.*

### **Left Home, Wife, Friends, Fortune, and Security, for the Risks of a Rebel**

As every soldier of any character knows exactly how a given campaign should be conducted, it is probable that many patriots envied Washington his position; it is also probable that the position gave Washington less satisfaction than it would have given to any other citizen who might have obtained it. His life since his marriage had been unusually pleasant and he was fully competent to enjoy it. Wars generally find numerous men very glad of an excuse to leave home, but Washington had not even a cross wife or a creditor to escape, while the salary attached to his office, even had he accepted it, would not have made good the losses sustained by his estates through his inability to manage his personal affairs. He left home, wife, friends, comfort, fortune, and security for the risks of a soldier's life and the chance of a rebel's doom. Millions of boys have gazed enviously at pictures of Washington taking command of the army; could a picture of Washington alone with his thoughts be exhibited, the meanest beggar would not envy the young commander. . . .





*From the Painting by Alonzo Chappel.*

## THE BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL



A man's deeds are matters of history, and in Washington's case the history was glorious; but a man's life and character are the results of his birth, education, environment, and self-training, principally the latter. Washington became commander-in-chief solely by force of his personal character, and his subsequent achievements were but the results of the manliness that he had acquired in days when he was comparatively obscure. All this has been said before and said better, but some facts, like some prayers, cannot be repeated too often.

*George Washington, John Habberton, p. 79.*

### **"The Liberties of the Country Are Safe!"**

Washington left Philadelphia on his way to Boston, June 21, escorted by a troop of horsemen, and accompanied by Schuyler and Lee, who had just been made major-generals by Congress. They had gone about twenty miles when they saw a man on horseback coming rapidly down the road. It was a messenger riding post-haste to Philadelphia, and carrying to Congress news of the battle of Bunker Hill. Everybody was stirred by the news and wanted to know the particulars.

"Why were the provincials compelled to retreat?" he was asked.

"It was for want of ammunition," he replied.

"Did they stand the fire of the regular troops?" asked Washington anxiously.

"That they did, and held their own fire in reserve until the enemy was within eight rods."

"Then the liberties of the country are safe!" exclaimed Washington. He remembered well the scenes under Braddock, and he knew what a sight it must have been to those New England farmers when a compact body of uniformed soldiers came marching up from the boats at Charlestown. If they could stand fearlessly, there was stuff in them to make soldiers of.

All along the route the people in the towns turned out to see Washington's cavalcade, and at Newark a committee of the New York Provincial Congress met to escort him to the city. There he left General Schuyler in command, and hurried forward to Cambridge, for the news of Bunker Hill made him extremely anxious to reach the army.

In New England, the nearer he came to the seat of war, the more excited and earnest he found the people. At every town he was met by the citizens and escorted through that town to the next. This was done at New Haven. The collegians all turned out, and they had a small band of music, at the head of which, curiously enough, was a Freshman who afterward made some stir in the world. It was Noah Webster, the man of spelling-book and dictionary fame. At Springfield, the party was met by a committee of the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, and at last, on the 2nd of July, he came to Watertown, where he was welcomed by the Provincial Congress itself, which was in session there.

*George Washington, an Historical Biography, Horace E. Scudder, p. 146.*

### A King of Men

Thus did that wonderful balance of mind—so great that in his whole career it would be hard to point out a single mistake—already impress his ablest contemporaries. Hand in hand with this rare soundness of judgment there went a completeness of moral self-control, which was all the more impressive inasmuch as Washington's was by no means a tame or commonplace nature, such as ordinary power of will would suffice to guide. He was a man of intense and fiery passions. His anger, when once aroused, had in it something so terrible that strong men were cowed by it like frightened children. This prodigious animal nature was curbed by a will of iron, and held in the service of a sweet and tender soul, into which no mean or unworthy thought had ever entered. Whole-souled devotion to public

duty, an incorruptible integrity which no appeal to ambition or vanity could for a moment solicit,—these were attributes of Washington, as well marked as his clearness of mind and his strength of purpose. And it was in no unworthy temple that Nature had enshrined this great spirit. His lofty stature (exceeding six feet), his grave and handsome face, his noble bearing and courtly grace of manner, all proclaimed in Washington a king of men.

*The American Revolution*, John Fiske, Vol. I, p. 135.

### **The Foremost Man in America**

So he rode on to his duty, the foremost man in America. And, on the morning of Monday, the third day of July, 1775, General George Washington rode into the broad pastures known as Cambridge common, and, beneath the spreading branches of an elm tree, which still stands—an old tree now, carefully preserved and famous through all the land—he drew his sword and in presence of the assembled army and a crowd of curious and enthusiastic people, he took command of the Continental army as general.

He was forty-three years old—just as old as Julius Cæsar when he took command of the army in Gaul and made himself great. Just as old as Napoleon when he made the mistake of his life and declared war against Russia. But how different from these two conquerors was George Washington! What they did for love of power he did for love of liberty—sacrificing comfort, ease, the pleasures of home and the quiet life he loved, because he felt it to be his duty.

A gallant soldier he was, under the Cambridge elm that warm July morning, he was what we call an imposing figure. He was tall, stalwart and erect, with thick brown hair drawn back into a queue, as all gentlemen then wore it, with a rosy face and a clear, bright eye—a strong, a healthy, a splendid-looking man in his uniform of blue and buff, an epaulet on each shoulder, and, in his three-cornered hat, the cockade of liberty. And the com-

mander-in-chief of the Continental army looked upon the army of which he had assumed command and determined to make soldiers of them and lead them on to final victory.

*The True Story of George Washington*, Elbridge S. Brooks, p. 81.

### The Noblest Man of His Day

Then, as now, every American knew all about war, so, outside the army, and to some extent within it, Washington was said to be not much of a general. It may have occurred to the thoughtful few that, while Howe and his trained lieutenants had nothing to think of but how to conquer the enemy, Washington spent much of his time in wondering where his ragged, hungry, ill-equipped, badly trained soldiers were to get food and clothing, ammunition and discipline. All of the British were far from home, and many of the rank and file were of the class who had no homes; the Americans, on the contrary, had families, farms, and shops within, at most, a few days' walk, and were always anxious to get to them. The best treated soldiers are notorious grumblers; what must have been the dissatisfaction in an army that was about as badly off as possible in every respect? All their complaints reached Washington, who supplemented them with his own intelligent concern for their condition. His writings at every period of the war show him to have been always keenly alive to the material and moral condition of his army and the effect, upon the community, of the withdrawal of so many men from industrial pursuits. The common impression about Washington, at the present day, is unmistakably due to contemplation of the impassive features which painters and sculptors in their devotion to conventionalism, have given, the Revolutionary commander; but a very little reading from any life of the noblest man of his day shows Washington to have been unapproachably rich in those qualities of heart which nowadays make a man's neighbor pronounce him a right good fellow.

*George Washington*, John Habberton, p. 155.

### The Virginia Fox-hunter and the New England Farmers

It had been a time of great anxiety to all men. The Virginia colonel was commander-in-chief; a motley army held Sir William Howe penned up in Boston, and why he so quietly accepted this sheep-like fate no man of us could comprehend. My aunt, a great letter-writer, had many correspondents, and one or two in the camp at Cambridge.

"My Virginia fox-hunter," said my aunt, "is having evil days with the New England farmers. He is disposed to be despotic, says—well, no matter who. He likes the whipping-post too well, and thinks all should, like himself, serve without pay. A slow man it is, but intelligent," says my Aunt Gainor; "sure to get himself right, and patient too. You will see, Hugh; he will come slowly to understand these people."

I smiled at the good lady's confidence, and yet she was right. They took him ill at first in that undisciplined camp, and queer things were said of him. Like the rest, he was learning the business of war, and was to commit many blunders and get sharp lessons in this school of the soldier.

These were everywhere uneasy times. Day after day we heard of this one or that one gone to swell the ever-changing number of those who beset Sir William. Gondolas—most unlike gondolas they were—were being built in haste for our own river defense. Committees, going from house to house, collected arms, tent-stuffs, kettles, blankets, and what not, for our troops. There were noisy elections, arrests of Tories; and in October the death of Peyton Randolph, ex-president of the Congress, and the news of the coming of the Hessian hirelings. It was a season of stir, angry discussion, and stern waiting for what was to come.

### **"Their Spirit Has Exceeded Their Strength"**

The commander-in-chief found himself heartily supported by Massachusetts local spirit, although the people are best described by Washington's words concerning the soldiers: "Their spirit has exceeded their strength." He had some valuable assistants—Lee, though a soldier of fortune, and what would now be called a crank, was an able disciplinarian; Israel Putnam never had an equal for getting work out of men when some able head had explained to him what the work ought to be; and Artemas Ward, the senior major-general, although he soon satisfied himself that his earlier rank of lieutenant-colonel, in a force sent against the Indians, was as high as his military abilities entitled him to, was an educated gentleman, and large-brained lawyer and legislator, whose sense of order and regard for the cause made him quite valuable. Gates was very useful as adjutant-general. Greene's memory was heavily charged with scientific theories of war, which his intelligence enabled him to put into successful practice whenever opportunity offered. There were also some trustworthy war governors, with Trumbull of Connecticut at their head.

Washington promptly proceeded to fortify his lines, and, like every other new commander, he with equal celerity asked for more money and men. The fortifications he possessed almost at once, for they depended only upon his own order and Yankee picks and shovels; the funds and re-enforcements came more slowly, for they had to be obtained through Congress, and all congresses are alike in their inability to do a little work before they have done a great deal of talk.

True to Virginian ancestry and tradition, Washington kept "open house" at Cambridge. If any man thinks that this, at least, was easy enough to do, let him first load his heart with everybody's else troubles, and then try to play



the genial host to a different score or two of chance visitors every day. Every body who was in trouble complained to Washington; even Schuyler, who was certainly one of the noblest characters of the Revolutionary period, allowed his affection for his chief to manifest itself in repinings; but to his credit be it said that Washington's confessions of similar troubles made New York's major-general ashamed of himself. Delegations from exposed sea-coast towns begged men and arms from Washington, instead of turning out their local militia. From this period of torment dates the impression, which never gained a foothold in Virginia, that Washington was by nature reserved and unsympathetic. Any true man learns, by listening to the complaints of other men, to confine his own bemoanings to his God and his wife, and to keep his heart off his sleeve, lest haply it may not be equal to the service demanded of it in its proper place.

*George Washington, John Habberton, p. 84.*

### **"General Gage, Take Care of *Your* Nose!"**

What the life and duties of the soldiers were may perhaps be better understood by the following letter of William Emerson, a chaplain in the army at Cambridge, written not long after Washington assumed command of the forces:

"New lords, new laws. The generals, Washington and Lee, are upon the lines every day. New orders from his excellency are read to the respective regiments every morning after prayers. The strictest government is taking place and the greatest distinction is made between the officers and soldiers. Every one is made to know his place and keep it, or be tied up and receive thirty or forty lashes according to his crime. Thousands are at work every day from four till eleven o'clock in the morning. It is surprising how much work has been done. The lines are extended almost from Cambridge to the Mystic River; so

that very soon it will be morally impossible for the enemy to get between the works, except in one place which is supposed to be left purposely unfortified, to entice the enemy out of their fortresses. Who would have thought twelve months past that all Cambridge and Charlestown would be covered over with American camps and cut up into forts and intrenchments, and all the lands, fields, and orchards laid common—horses and cattle feeding in the choicest mowing land, whole fields of corn eaten down to the ground, and large parks of well regulated locusts cut down for fire-wood and other public uses. This, I must say, looks a little melancholy. My quarters are at the foot of the famous Prospect Hill, where such preparations are made for the reception of the enemy. It is very diverting to walk among the camps. They are as different in their form as the owners are in their dress, and every tent is a portraiture of the temper and taste of the persons who encamp in it. Some are made of boards and some of sail-cloth; some partly of one and partly of the other. Again, others are made of stone or turf, brick or brush. Some are thrown up in a hurry; others are curiously wrought with doors and windows, done with wreaths and withes, in the manner of a basket. Some are your proper tents and marquees, looking like the regular camp of the enemy. In these are the Rhode Islanders, who are furnished with tent equipage and everything in the most exact English style. However, I think this great variety rather a beauty than a blemish in the army."

The bulk of the army at Cambridge had been made up of men from the New England colonies, of whom naturally Massachusetts had provided the largest number. Others were hastening, however, to join the ranks, and in some of the colonies, notably Pennsylvania, so great was the enthusiasm that measures had to be taken to restrict the numbers. One of the colonial newspapers informs us of the unique method employed by one leader to select the best men



Gen. Daniel Morgan



Gen. Artemas Ward



Gen. Israel Putnam



Gen. Henry Knox

PORTRAITS OF FOUR GENERALS BESIEGING BOSTON



without giving offense to those who might not be chosen. He took a piece of chalk and drew on a board a nose of ordinary size. Then he placed his drawing at a distance of one hundred and fifty yards from the line and declared that those who should shoot nearest to the mark should go to Cambridge with him. More than sixty hit the mark, and the newspaper sagely concludes its description of the incident by remarking:

"General Gage, take care of *your* nose!"

"Daniel Morgan's rifle-men," composed for the most part of pioneers from Virginia, together with a few from Maryland and Western Pennsylvania, were among the best of the recruits, although the New England men were not as cordial in their welcome as they might have been owing to their prejudice against Irishmen, for the majority of this band were of Irish birth. They were famous for their skill with the rifle, and it is said that on the run through the forest they could load their guns and that every man was able to hit a running squirrel at a distance of three hundred yards. The garb of these sharp-shooters was also unique, and every one wore a loose hunting shirt, on the front of which were the well-known words of Patrick Henry, "Liberty or Death." The leader of this band, Daniel Morgan himself, was as unique as his men. Born in New Jersey, of Welsh descent, he was a giant in stature and possessed of a physical strength almost beyond belief. At one time he had received five hundred lashes on the bare back by the order of a British officer, and at another he had escaped from the Indians after having been shot through the neck by a rifle ball.

*A Short History of the American Revolution*, Everett Tomlinson, p. 70.

### Most Unsoldier-like in Figure

The army, if we may call it by that name, which was besieging Boston was composed almost exclusively of New Englanders. But it was joined during the summer by a few

troops from the frontiers of Pennsylvania and Virginia, who aroused much interest, because they were expected to make deadly use of the rifle at three hundred yards instead of using the smooth-bore musket, which was useless at only half that distance.

No money had to be appropriated to buy their weapons, for, like the Boer of South Africa, each one of them procured his rifle by taking it down from the pegs on which it rested above his fireplace. He slung his own powder-horn across his shoulder and strapped his bullet-pouch around his waist.

As for his uniform, it consisted of a round hat, which could be bought for a trifle at any country store, and a garment made at home by his wife, and sometimes called a smock-frock, which was nothing more than a shirt belted around the waist and hanging down over the hips instead of being tucked into the trousers. It was the same sort of garment used by farm laborers, and it was made of the cotton cloth which is now used for overalls, or of ticking such as we use to cover mattresses and pillows. When used in the woods it was called a rifle-shirt or hunting-shirt, was sometimes ornamented with a fringed cape, and into its ample looseness above the belt were stuffed loaves of bread, salt pork, dried venison, a frying-pan, or a coffee-pot, until the hardy woodsman became most unsoldier-like in figure.

*The True Story of the American Revolution*, Sydney George Fisher, p. 259.

### **"An Egregious Want of Public Spirit"**

No offensive movement was attempted by the British, and Washington was unable to provoke a fight. There were times when the troops in Boston could have broken the colonial line, doubled up the pieces, sent part of the farmers flying home, and turned the others into bushwhackers, and probably the British general longed to do it, but he was acting under orders. George III, though his intellect had

never ripened, was not a ferocious man, and he preferred to conquer peaceably if possible, while Lord North, although a time-server, was a man of brains. If they believed that the Yankees could be wearied into submission, they were not far from right, for there were times when all the persuasions of all the nobler heads and hearts in the army were necessary to prevent the early enthusiasts from breaking ranks and going home. While the weather remained warm soldiering in front of Boston was simply glorious picnicking, but when cold nights began, and overcoats were scarce, and a turn on guard seemed harder work than a ten-mile walk to a country dance, the boys felt homesick. Many a homesick Yankee has tramped and fought his way alone from the Atlantic to the Pacific; how tremendous, then, must have been the temptation to desert from the lines before Boston when home was near by and the road led through a friendly country! Besides, the original term of enlistment of most of the troops would expire with the year.

Washington himself was homesick from the beginning of the war to the end, and realized the possibility of finding himself without an army. He was therefore anxious to attack the enemy, but he was always restrained by Congress or a council of war, or both. Through long furloughs many re-enlistments were secured, and at the beginning of 1776 he still had an army, but at a terrible cost to his own patience and his regard for his countrymen. He complained to Congress of "an egregious want of public spirit" in New England, and that "instead of pressing to be engaged in the cause of their country, which I vainly flattered myself would be the case, I find we are likely to be deserted in a most critical time."

*George Washington, John Habberton, p. 88.*

### **The Ministers Who Provoked and Prolonged the Revolution**

The administrations of the English government, from 1760 to the close of our Revolutionary war, were more or

less directed by the intriguing incapacity of the king. George the Third is said to have possessed many private virtues,—and very private for a long time he kept them from his subjects,—but, as a monarch, he was without magnanimity in his sentiments or enlargement in his ideas; prejudiced, uncultivated, bigoted, and perverse; his boasted morality and piety, when exercised in the sphere of government, partook of the narrowness of his mind and the obstinacy of his will; his conscience being used to transmute his hatreds into duties, and his religious sentiment to sanctify his vindictive passions; and as it was his ambition to rule an empire by the petty politics of a court, he preferred rather to have his folly flattered by parasites than his ignorance enlightened by statesmen. Such a disposition in the king of a free country was incompatible with efficiency in the conduct of affairs, as it split parties into factions and made established principles yield to personal expedients. Bute, the king's first minister, after a short administration unexampled for corruption and feebleness, gave way before a storm of popular contempt and hatred. To him succeeded George Grenville, the originator of the Stamp Act, and the blundering promoter of American Independence. Grenville was a hard, sullen, dogmatic, penurious man of affairs, with a complete mastery of the details of parliamentary business, and threading with ease all the labyrinths of English law, but limited in his conceptions, fixed in his opinions, without any of that sagacity which reads results in their principles, and chiefly distinguished for a kind of sour honesty, not infrequently found in men of harsh tempers and technical intellects. It was soon discovered that, though imperious enough to be a tyrant, he was not servile enough to be a tool; that the same domineering temper which enabled him to push arbitrary measures in Parliament, made him put insolent questions in the closet; and the king, in despair of a servant who could not tax America and persecute Wilkes, without at the same time insulting his master, dismissed



him for the Marquis of Rockingham, a leader of the great Whig connection, and a sturdy friend of the colonists both before the Revolution and during its progress. Under him the Stamp Act was repealed; but his administration soon proved too liberal to satisfy the politicians who governed the understanding of the king; and the experiment was tried of a composite ministry, put together by Chatham, consisting of members selected from different factions, but without any principle of cohesion to unite them; and the anarchy inherent in the arrangement became portentously apparent, when Chatham, driven by the gout into a state of nervous imbecility, left it to work out its mission of misrule and its eccentric control was seized by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the gay, false, dissipated, veering, presumptuous, and unscrupulous Charles Townshend. This man was so brilliant and fascinating as an orator that Walpole said of one of his speeches, that it was like hearing Garrick act extempore scenes from Congreve; but he was without any guiding moral or political principles; and, boundlessly admired by the House of Commons and boundlessly craving its admiration, he seemed ever to act from the impulses of vanity, and speak ever from the inspiration of champagne. Grenville, smarting under his recent defeat, but still doggedly bent on having a revenue raised in America, missed no opportunity of goading this versatile political *roué* with his exasperating sarcasms. "You are cowards," he said on one occasion, turning to the Treasury bench; "you are afraid of the Americans; you dare not tax America." Townshend, stung by this taunt, started passionately up from his seat, exclaiming, "Fear! cowards! dare not tax America? I do dare tax America!" and this boyish bravado ushered in the celebrated bill, which was to cost England thirteen colonies, add a hundred millions of pounds to her debt, and affix a stain on her public character. Townshend, by the grace of a putrid fever, was saved from witnessing the consequences of his vainglorious pre-

sumption; and the direction of his policy eventually fell into the hands of Lord North, a good-natured, second-rate, jobbing statesman, equally destitute of lofty virtues and splendid vices, under whose administration the American war was commenced and prosecuted. Of all the ministers of George the Third, North was the most esteemed by his sovereign; for he had the tact to follow plans which originated in the king's unreasoning brain and wilful disposition, and yet to veil their weak injustice in a drapery of arguments furnished from his own more enlarged mind and easier temper. Chatham and Camden thundered against him in the Lords; Burke and Fox raved and shouted statesmanship to him in the Commons, and screamed out the maxims of wisdom in ecstasies of invective; but he, good-naturedly indifferent to popular execration, and sleeping quietly through whole hours of philippics hot with threats of impeachment, pursued his course of court-ordained folly with the serene composure of a Ulysses or a Somers. The war, as conducted by his ministry, was badly managed; but he had one wise thought which happily failed to become a fact. The command in America was offered to Lord Clive; but, fortunately for us, Clive, at about that time, concluded to commit suicide, and our rustic soldiery were thus saved from meeting in the field a general, who, in vigor of will and fertility of resource, was unequalled by any European commander who had appeared since the death of Marlborough. It may here be added, that Lord North's plans of conciliation were the amiabilities of tyranny and benignities of extortion. They bring to mind the little French fable, wherein a farmer convokes the tenants of his barn-yard, and with sweet solemnity says, "Dear animals, I have assembled you here to advise me what sauce I shall cook you with." "But," exclaims an insurrectionary chicken, "We don't want to be eaten at all"—to which the urbane chairman replies, "My child you wander from the point!"

### Provisions, Discipline, Ammunition, Scarce

But any conceit he may have indulged in was speedily knocked out of him when he rode through the lines to inspect his men. He knew that in Boston were four experienced English officers—Generals Gage, Howe, Clinton and Burgoyne—the latter, although he wrote two plays and was compelled to surrender at Saratoga, was far more of a man than Americans have believed. These officers had 11,000 well disciplined and equipped soldiers, and there was a strong British fleet in the bay. To combat this force Washington had 14,000 men, who, on leaving their homes had been so heavily loaded with patriotism that they had not been able to bring anything else. They were full of fight, and each man knew exactly how the war should be conducted, but they were so deficient in ammunition that a ten-minute engagement would have exhausted it, as Washington accidentally discovered while trying to provoke a fight.

Discipline was about as scarce as ammunition, and officers competent to require and maintain it were wanting. A Rhode Island brigadier, son of a Quaker miller named Greene, formed in himself and his little command a pleasing exception to the rule, and afterward demonstrated his superiority to all of the Indian fighters, except Washington, who outranked him at the start; but most of the officers were stout-hearted, hard-headed fellows, who respected their men who had elected them far too much to ask them to do anything so distasteful as drill. Provisions were scarce, medical attendance was insufficient, there were no defenses worth the name, and worst of all, there was no money.

*George Washington, John Habberton, p. 83.*

### Scouring the Country for Powder

By the end of July the army was in a better posture of defence, and then at the beginning of the next month,

as the prospect was brightening, it was suddenly discovered that there was no gunpowder. An undrilled army, imperfectly organized, was facing a disciplined force and had only some nine rounds in the cartridge-boxes. Yet there is no quivering in the letters from headquarters. Anxiety and strain of nerve are apparent; but a resolute determination rises over all, supported by a ready fertility of resource. Couriers flew over the country asking for powder in every town and in every village. A vessel was even dispatched to the Bermudas to seize there a supply of powder, of which the general, always listening, had heard. Thus the immediate and grinding pressure was presently relieved, but the staple of war still remained pitifully and perilously meager all through the winter.

Meantime, while thus overwhelmed with the cares immediately about him, Washington was watching the rest of the country. He had a keen eye upon Johnson and his Indians in the valley of the Mohawk; he followed sharply every movement of Tryon and the Tories in New York; he refused with stern good sense to detach troops to Connecticut and Long Island, knowing well when to give and when to say No, a difficult monosyllable for the new general of freshly revolted colonies. But if he would not detach in one place, he was ready enough to do in another. He sent one expedition by Lake Champlain, under Montgomery, to Montreal, and gave Arnold picked troops to march through the wilds of Maine and strike Quebec. The scheme was bold and brilliant, both in conception and in execution, and came very near severing Canada forever from the British crown. A chapter of little accidents, each one of which proved as fatal as it was unavoidable, a moment's delay on the Plains of Abraham, and the whole campaign failed; but there was a grasp of conditions, a clearness of perception, and a comprehensiveness about the plan, which stamp it as the work of a great soldier, who saw besides the military importance, the enormous political value held out by the chance of such a victory.

The daring, far-reaching quality of this Canadian expedition was more congenial to Washington's temper and character than the wearing work of the siege. All that man could do before Boston was done, and still Congress expected the impossible, and grumbled because without ships he did not secure the harbor. He himself, while he inwardly resented such criticism, chafed under the monotonous drudgery of the intrenchments. He was longing, according to his nature, to fight, and was, it must be confessed, quite ready to attempt the impossible in his own way. Early in September he proposed to attack the town in boats and by the neck of land at Roxbury, but the council of officers unanimously voted against him. A little more than a month later he planned another attack, and was again voted down by his officers. Councils of war never fight, it is said, and perhaps in this case it was well that such was their habit, for the schemes look rather desperate now. To us they serve to show the temper of the man, and also his self-control, for Washington was ready enough to over-ride councils when wholly free from doubt himself.

*George Washington*, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. I, p. 139.

### **Trials with Friend and Foe**

Washington had for his headquarters the beautiful colonial house in Cambridge occupied a hundred years later by the poet Longfellow. In this house his wife visited him during the long campaign around Boston. He found his men a most unsoldierlike crowd in discipline and appearance. The men elected officers who let them have their own way. Of these Washington once wrote:

"There is no such thing as getting officers of this stamp to carry orders into execution—to curry favor with the men (by whom they were chosen, and on whose smile they may possibly think they may again rely) seems to be one of the principal objects of their attention. I have made a pretty good slam amongst such kind of officers as the Massa-

chusetts government abounds in, since I came into this camp, having broke one colonel and two captains for cowardly behavior in the action on Bunker Hill, two captains for drawing more pay and provisions than they had men in their company, and one for being absent from his post when the enemy appeared there and burnt a house just by it. Besides these I have at this time one colonel, one major, one captain and two subalterns under arrest for trial. In short I spare none and yet fear it will not all do, as these people seem to be too attentive to everything but their own interests."

It was an army of everything but soldiers, in the children's "button charm:" "Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief, doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief, tinker, tailor," and farmer—instead of "soldier, sailor,"—and so on through the childish lingo. . . .

General Gage, the British commander in Boston, had treated the "rebel" prisoners as if they were criminals, and replied to Washington's remonstrances to this in contemptuous and even scurrilous terms. There seemed to be no end to the stupidity and arrogance of the commanders the British Government sent over to America. Gage sneered at Washington's "usurped authority," and called the Americans "criminals"—about to be hanged. Washington replied with cool dignity:

"My duty now makes it necessary to apprise you that for the future I shall regulate all my conduct toward those gentlemen who are or may be in our possession exactly by the rule you shall observe towards those of ours now in your custody."

In reply to Gage's allusions to Washington himself there is a touch of sarcasm:

"You affect, sir, to despise all rank not derived from the same source as your own. I cannot conceive one more honorable than that which flows from the uncorrupted choice of a brave and free people, the purest source and

original fountain of all power. Far from making it a plea for cruelty, a mind of true magnanimity and enlarged ideas would comprehend and respect it."

Washington's acquaintance with Gage had begun twenty years earlier, in the Braddock campaign. It is doubtful, however, if the British general's soul possessed "magnanimity" enough to appreciate the rebel commander's sarcasm.

*The Washington Story-Calendar*, Wayne Whipple, August 28 to September 4 1910.

### "Old Put" and the Fat Woman

As we learn what life he led during these years (he was on horseback during the greater part of forty-eight hours on one occasion), we do not need to be assured that he possessed a strong constitution, and still less that he grew gray and blind in the service of his country. Fortunate for him that he was able to laugh sometimes. For George Washington knew how to laugh in spite of the efforts of his early biographers to conceal what in their eyes was apparently an infirmity. While one of the several treacheries was being unearthed during the Boston winter, Washington looked out of an upper window at headquarters, and beheld this treachery's missing link approaching—in the shape of a large, fat woman, whom large, stout General Putnam had straddled in front of him on his saddle, and was thus carrying captive to the commander. The commander appears to have been duly convulsed. In the midst of matters so few of which are laughing matters it would be agreeable to tell and dwell upon every instance of mirth of the commander that is recorded; but we must content ourselves with the knowledge that he did laugh heartily more than once, and that the incident of the fat woman is not the solitary jet of hilarity whose radiance twinkles in that dusk.

From an address on *The Seven Ages of Washington*, delivered by Owen Wister before the University of Pennsylvania, on University Day, February 22, 1907, at the Academy of Music, Philadelphia, and reported in *The Alumni Register*, Vol. XI, No. 6, p. 265.

### **"Seized Two Brawny Riflemen by the Throat"**

One morning, while Washington was closeted with Sullivan at headquarters, on some mission from the house, Colonel Glover, of the Marblehead regiment, which was encamped in an enclosed pasture north of the College, came in to announce that his men were in a state of mutiny. Washington instantly strode to his horse, kept always in readiness at the door, leaped into the saddle, and, followed by Gen. Sullivan and Col. Glover, rode at full gallop to the camp. His servant, Pompey, sent in advance to let down the bars, had just dismounted for the purpose, when Washington, coming up leaped over Pompey, bars and all, and darted into the midst of the mutineers. It was on the occasion of the well-known contest between the fishermen of Marblehead and the Virginian riflemen under Morgan; the latter of whom, in half Indian equipments of fringed and ruffled hunting shirts, provoked the merriment of the northern troops. From words they proceeded to blows and soon at least a thousand combatants, armed for the most part with snow-balls, were engaged in conflict. "The General threw the bridle of his horse into his servant's hands, and, rushing into the thickest of the fight, seized two tall, brawny riflemen by the throat, keeping them at arm's length, talking to, and shaking them."

*The Life of James Sullivan, T. C. Amory, Vol. I, p. 69.*

### **Some Relaxation and a "Handsome Lift"**

When Congress finally determined that Boston should be attacked, it was at a time when the army was particularly weak and the British position had been strengthened. Of a congressional committee of three, who had previously visited the city to consult with Washington and a New England committee, the Virginia and Carolina members who owned no property in Boston, patriotically expressed themselves willing that the city should be burned, if neces-





*Engraved by G. R. Hall from the Original by F. O. C. Darley.*

**"SEIZING TWO BRAVNY RIFLEMEN BY THE THROAT"**



sary, in case of an engagement, and even the Pennsylvania member, Benjamin Franklin, of whom Boston was one of the birthplaces, is not on record as having objected. Naturally the New England committee did not care to regard Boston in the light of blazing roofs, nor did they desire to see any thing done that might provoke the British to fire the town.

There was but little likelihood, however, of the Yankee cannon setting fire to Boston, for there was scarcely any artillery in the works or any powder with which to charge the nine-pounder or two that were mounted. Fortunately, one of the little cruisers which Washington had sent out captured a ship loaded with cannon, shot, musket-balls, and gun-flints, but no powder. A Boston bookseller named Knox, destined afterward to become famous, had gone to Ticonderoga earlier in the campaign for some of the ordnance captured by Ethan Allen a year before, and he brought it, too, in spite of obstacles such as no transportation encountered during the great civil war; he took the cannon on sleds, in winter, through Vermont and New Hampshire. Powder was still lacking, but fortunately Lee, who had been sent to New York to head off an unexpected demonstration, sent Washington a quantity from the royal arsenal in that city.

Washington was not entirely without encouragement during his long period of helplessness in front of Boston. His wife came to camp; or, to speak more politely, Lady Washington visited Cambridge, so there was at least one person near him who did not ask for promotion or a contract, or talk about the state of the country. She even insisted upon celebrating Twelfth Night, the anniversary of her wedding, by giving a grand party, and although her husband at first objected, she overruled his objections, and probably to his great benefit, for the commander-in-chief needed a great deal more diversion than usually he had.

Washington's heart was also strengthened, with all

other patriotic hearts, by Lieutenant Mowat, R. N., who had not the slightest intention of helping the colonial cause when he sailed into Falmouth (now Portland, Maine) and started the series of tremendous conflagrations for which Portland stands proudly pre-eminent among American towns. The burning of Falmouth enabled every patriot to hate England without feeling guilty about it, and it even cured Washington of whatever love he may have had left for royal rule, for the doughty lieutenant announced that all other seaports were to be treated as Falmouth had been. In the South, Lord Dunmore, late an honored acquaintance of Washington, gave the patriot cause a handsome lift by burning Norfolk.

*George Washington, John Habberton, p. 93.*

Washington elected commander-in-chief,	June 15, 1775
Battle of Bunker Hill.....	June 17, 1775
Washington took command of Continental Army,	July 3, 1775
Montgomery captured Montreal...	November 13, 1775
Montgomery and Arnold stormed Quebec,	Dec. 31, 1775

## CHAPTER XIII

### DRIVING THE BRITISH OUT OF BOSTON

#### **Raising the Grand Union Flag on New Year's Day, 1776**

The official origin of the flag with thirteen alternate red and white stripes, representing the United Colonies, and the subjoined crosses of St. George and St. Andrew (the "king's colors") in a blue canton, which was raised on Prospect Hill, Cambridge, on the first day of January, 1776, has never been satisfactorily determined.

A book on colonial and revolutionary flags, published some years ago, says that the Colonial Congress, in the fall of 1775, appointed Messrs. Franklin, Harrison, and Lynch as a committee to consider and recommend a design for a colonial flag, and that the committee reached Cambridge on the morning of December 15, 1775, and completed their duties before midnight of that day. Nearly twenty pages are devoted to the discussions that were engaged in by the committee, General Washington, and two or three unnamed persons, relative to the design of a flag for the standard of the army and navy. It is stated that the union design was unanimously approved by the committee and adopted by General Washington, but the author fails to give his authority for that and other statements given in the book, relative to the Cambridge flag.

General Washington, writing to Colonel Joseph Reed, his military secretary, under date of January 4, 1776, says:

"We are at length favored with a sight of his majesty's most gracious speech, breathing sentiments of tenderness and compassion for his deluded American subjects! The echo is not yet come to hand, but we know what it must be; and, as Lord North said (and we ought to have believed and

acted accordingly), we now know the ultimatum of British justice. The speech I send you. A volume of them was sent out by the Boston gentry; and, farcical enough, we gave great joy to them, without knowing or intending it; for, on that day, the day which gave being to the new army, but before the proclamation came to hand, we had hoisted the Union flag in compliment to the United Colonies. But behold! it was received in Boston as a token of the deep impression the speech had made upon us, and as a signal of submission. So we hear, by a person out of Boston, last night. By this time, I presume, they begin to think it strange we have not made a formal surrender of our lives.”

*The Stars and Stripes and Other American Flags*, Peleg D. Harrison, pp. 39 to 44.

### Not the Stars and Stripes

Washington and his men, indeed, nearly all the people, had to bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, and endure all things, before they could bring our beautiful banner to its perfection and make it the flag of the free and independent nation we are now so justly proud to call our own. The growth of the flag even then was gradual and slow.

The first flag . . . was not the Stars and Stripes, by any means. Its simple colored stripes tell a most interesting story. It shows that, even then, the colonies had no idea of separating from England. They were still loyal English people demanding liberties and freedom from oppression that they believed their king and Parliament ought to grant to the faithful subjects beyond the sea. The flag that Franklin and the Congress devised for Washington proves this. Instead of having stars in the canton as they are now, they had the British flag—the English Cross of St. George, in red, and the Scotch Cross of St. Andrew, in white, placed one over the other, on a blue canton. With this design they had thirteen red and white stripes, to show that the thirteen colonies were banded together but still loyal to the old flag

if the king and his counsellors would grant them the liberty due to all Englishmen, allow them to be represented in the English Parliament and have a voice in the affairs of government, especially in the management of their own matters.

When this flag was raised over the garrison at Cambridge, Massachusetts, with appropriate ceremonies, by Washington and the flag committee, it was greeted with thirteen cheers and thirteen guns—that is, a cannon was fired thirteen times.

This flag was displayed by Washington at the head of the colonial army, in Cambridge, just across the river from Boston, on New Year's Day, 1776, six months before the Continental Congress, in Philadelphia, voted to adopt the Declaration of Independence. The British, when they saw the new banner, seemed to understand that it meant that the colonies would yield after all.

*The Story of the American Flag, Wayne Whipple, p. 38.*

### **“Obliged to Conceal It from My Own Officers”**

Meanwhile, Washington was incessantly goaded by the impatient murmurs of the public, as we may judge by his letters to Mr. Reed. “I know the integrity of my own heart,” writes he, on the 10th of February; “but to declare it, unless to a friend, may be an argument of vanity. I know the unhappy predicament I stand in; I know that much is expected of me; I know that without men, without arms, without ammunition, without anything fit for the accomodation of a soldier, little is to be done, and, what is mortifying, I know that I cannot stand justified to the world without exposing my own weaknesses, and injuring the cause, by declaring my wants; which I am determined not to do, further than unavoidable necessity brings every man acquainted with them.

“My own situation is so irksome to me at times, that if I did not consult the public good more than my tranquillity, I should long ere this have put everything on the

cast of a die. So far from having an army of twenty thousand men, well armed, I have been here with less than one half that number, including sick, furloughed, and on command; and those neither armed nor clothed as they should be. In short, my situation has been such, that I have been obliged to use art, to conceal it from my own officers."

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. II, p. 217.

### **The Blockade of Boston**

The siege of Boston continued through the winter, without any striking incident to enliven its monotony. The British remained within their works, leaving the beleaguering army slowly to augment its forces. The country was dissatisfied with the inaction of the latter. Even Congress was anxious for some successful blow that might revive popular enthusiasm. Washington shared this anxiety, and had repeatedly, in councils of war, suggested an attack upon the town, but had found a majority of his general officers opposed to it. He had hoped some favorable opportunity would present, when, the harbor being frozen, the troops might approach the town on ice. The winter, however, though severe at first, proved a mild one and the bay continued open. General Putnam, in the mean time, having completed the new works at Lechmere Point, and being desirous of keeping up the spirit of his men, resolved to treat them to an exploit. Accordingly, from his "impregnable fortress" of Cobble Hill, he detached a party of about two hundred, under his favorite officer, Major Knowlton, to surprise and capture a British guard stationed at Charlestown. It was a daring enterprise, and executed with spirit. As Charlestown Neck was completely protected, Knowlton led his men across the mill-dam, round the base of the hill, and immediately below the fort; set fire to the guard-house and some buildings in its vicinity; made several prisoners, and retired without loss; although thundered upon by the





*Engraved by Halpin from the Original by F. O. C. Darley.*

THE ARRIVAL OF GENERAL KNOX WITH CANNON FROM TICONDEROGA



cannon of the fort. The exploit was attended by a dramatic effect on which Putnam had not calculated.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. II, page 214.

### "It Is a Noble Cause"

Further ammunition being received from the royal arsenal at New York and other quarters and a re-enforcement of ten regiments of militia, Washington no longer met with opposition to his warlike measures. Lechmere Point, which Putnam had fortified, was immediately to be supplied with mortars and heavy cannon, so as to command Boston on the north; and Dorchester Heights, on the south of the town, were forthwith to be taken possession of.

"If any thing," said Washington, "will induce the enemy to hazard an engagement, it will be our attempting to fortify those heights, as, in that event taking place, we shall be able to command a great part of the town, and almost the whole harbor." Their possession, moreover, would enable him to push his works to Nook's Hill, and other points opposite Boston, whence a cannonade and bombardment must drive the enemy from the city.

The council of Massachusetts, at his request, ordered the militia of the towns contiguous to Dorchester and Roxbury, to hold themselves in readiness to repair to the lines at those places with arms, ammunition and accoutrements, on receiving a preconcerted signal.

Washington felt painfully aware how much depended upon the success of this attempt. There was a cloud of gloom and distrust lowering upon the public mind. Danger threatened on the north and south. Montgomery had fallen before the walls of Quebec. The army in Canada was shattered. Tryon and the Tories were plotting mischief in New York. Dunmore was harassing the lower part of Virginia, and Clinton and his fleet were prowling along the coast, on a secret errand of mischief.

Washington's general orders evince the solemn and

anxious state of his feelings. In those of the 26th of February, he forbade all playing at cards and other games of chance. "At this time of public distress," writes he, "men may find enough to do in the service of God and their country, without abandoning themselves to vice and immorality. It is a noble cause we are engaged in; it is the cause of virtue and mankind; every advantage and comfort to us and our posterity depend upon the vigor of our exertions; in short, freedom or slavery must be the result of our conduct; there can, therefore, be no greater inducement to men to behave well. But it may not be amiss to the troops to know, that, if any man in action shall presume to skulk, hide himself, or retreat from the enemy without the orders of his commanding officer, he will be instantly shot down as an example of cowardice; cowards having too frequently disconcerted the best formed troops by their dastardly behavior."

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. II, p. 220.

### **"When the Dreadful 'Tomorrow' Will Be, I Know Not"**

The evening of Monday the 4th of March was fixed upon for the occupation on Dorchester Heights. The ground was frozen too hard to be easily intrenched; fascines therefore and gabions and bundles of screwed hay were collected during the two preceding nights with which to form breastworks and redoubts. During these two busy nights the enemies' batteries were cannonaded and bombarded from opposite points to occupy their attention and prevent their noticing these preparations. They replied with spirit, and the incessant roar of artillery thus kept up, covered completely the rumbling of wagons and ordnance.

How little the enemy were aware of what was impending, we may gather from the following extract of a letter from an officer of distinction in the British army in Boston to his friend in London, dated on the 3d of March:

"For these last six weeks or near two months, we have

been better amused than could possibly be expected in our situation. We had a theatre, we had balls, and there is actually a subscription on foot for a masquerade. England seems to have forgot us, and we have endeavored to forget ourselves. But we were aroused to a sense of our situation last night, in a manner unpleasant enough. The rebels have been for some time past erecting a bomb battery, and last night they began to play on us. Two shells fell not far from me. One fell upon Colonel Monckton's house, but luckily did not burst until it had crossed the street. Many houses were damaged but no lives lost. The rebel army," adds he "is not brave, I believe, but it is agreed on all hands that their artillery officers are at least equal to ours."

The wife of John Adams, who resided in the vicinity of the American camp, and knew that a general action was meditated, expresses in a letter to her husband the feelings of a patriot woman during the suspense of these nights.

"I have been in a constant state of anxiety, since you left me," writes she on Saturday. "It has been said to-morrow and tomorrow for this month, and when the dreadful tomorrow will be, I know not. But hark! The house this instant shakes with the roar of cannon. I have been close to the door, and find it is a cannonade from our army. Orders, I find, are come, for all the remaining militia to repair to the lines Monday night, by twelve o'clock. No sleep for me tonight."

On Sunday the letter is resumed. "I went to bed after twelve, but got no rest; the cannon continued firing, and my heart kept pace with them all night. We had a pretty quiet day, but what tomorrow will bring forth, God only knows."

On Monday, the appointed evening, she continues: "I have just returned from Penn's Hill, where I have been sitting to hear the amazing roar of cannon, and from whence I could see every shell that was thrown. The sound, I

think, is one of the grandest in nature, and is of the true species of the sublime. 'Tis now an incessant roar; but oh, the fatal ideas which are connected with the sound! How many of our dear countrymen must fall!

"I went to bed about twelve, and rose again a little after one. I could no more sleep than if I had been in the engagement; the rattling of the windows, the jar of the house, the continual roar of twenty-four pounders, and the bursting of shells, give us such ideas, and realize a scene to us of which we could scarcely form any conception. I hope to give you joy of Boston even if it is in ruins, before I send this away."

*Life of George Washington, Washington Irving, Vol. II, p. 223.*

### **"With the Expedition of Genii"**

On the Monday evening thus graphically described, as soon as the firing commenced, the detachment under General Thomas set out on its cautious and secret march from the lines of Roxbury and Dorchester. Everything was conducted as regularly and quietly as possible. A covering party of eight hundred men preceded the carts with the intrenching tools; then came General Thomas with the working party, twelve hundred strong, followed by a train of three hundred wagons, laden with fascines, gabions, and hay screwed into bundles of seven or eight hundred weight. A great number of such bundles were ranged in a line along Dorchester Neck on the side next the enemy, to protect the troops, while passing, from being raked by the fire of the enemy. Fortunately, although the moon, as Washington writes, was shining in its full lustre, the flash and roar of cannonry from opposite points, and the bursting of bomb-shells high in the air, so engaged and diverted the attention of the enemy, that the detachment reached the heights about eight o'clock, without being heard or perceived. The covering party then divided; one half proceeded to the point nearest Boston, the other to the one

nearest to Castle Williams. The working party commenced to fortify, under the directions of Gridley, the veteran engineer, who had planned the works on Bunker's Hill. It was severe labor, for the earth was frozen eighteen inches deep; but the men worked with more than their usual spirit; for the eye of the commander-in-chief was upon them. Though not called there by his duties, Washington could not be absent from this eventful preparation.

The labors of the night were carried on by the Americans with their usual activity and address. When a relief party arrived at four o'clock in the morning, two forts were in sufficient forwardness to furnish protection against small-arms and grape-shot; and such use was made of the fascines and bundles of screwed hay, that, at dawn, a formidable-looking fortress frowned along the height. We have the testimony of a British officer already quoted, for the fact. "This morning at daybreak we discovered two redoubts on Dorchester Point, and two smaller ones on their flanks. They were all raised during last night, with an expedition equal to that of the genii belonging to Aladdin's wonderful lamp. From these hills they command the whole town, so that we must drive them from their posts, or desert the place."

Howe gazed at the mushroom fortress with astonishment, as it loomed indistinctly, but grandly, through a morning fog.

"The rebels," exclaimed he, "have done more work in one night, than my whole army would have done in one month."

Washington had watched, with intense anxiety, the effect of the revelation at daybreak. "When the enemy first discovered our works in the morning," writes he, "they seemed to be in great confusion, and from their movements, to intend an attack."

### Evacuate the Place as Soon as Possible

An American, who was on Dorchester Heights, gives a picture of the scene. A tremendous cannonade was commenced from the forts in Boston, and the shipping in the harbor. "Cannon shot," writes he, "are continually rolling and rebounding over the hill, and it is astonishing to observe how little our soldiers are terrified by them. The royal troops are perceived to be in motion, as if embarking to pass the harbor and land on Dorchester shore, to attack our works. The hills and elevations in this vicinity are covered with spectators to witness deeds of horror in the expected conflict. His excellency, General Washington, is present, animating and encouraging the soldiers, and they in return manifest their joy; and express a warm desire for the approach of the enemy; each man knows his own place. Our breastworks are strengthened, and among the means of defence are a great number of barrels, filled with stones and sand, and arranged in front of our works, which are to be put in motion, and made to roll down the hill, to break the legs of the assailants as they advance."

General Thomas was re-inforced with two thousand men. Old Putnam stood ready to make a descent upon the north side of the town, with his four thousand picked men, as soon as the heights on the south should be assailed: "All the forenoon," says the American above cited, "we were in momentary expectation of witnessing an awful scene; nothing less than the carnage of Breed's Hill battle was expected."

As Washington rode about the heights, he reminded the troops that it was the 5th of March, the anniversary of the Boston massacre, and called on them to revenge the slaughter of their brethren. They answered him with shouts. "Our officers and men," writes he, "appeared impatient for the appeal. The event, I think, must have been fortunate; nothing less than success and victory on our side."



In the evening the British began to move. Lord Percy was to lead the attack. Twenty-five hundred men were embarked in transports, which were to convey them to the rendezvous at Castle Williams. A violent storm set in from the east. The transports could not reach their place of destination. The men-of-war could not cover and support them. A furious surf beat on the shore where the boats would have to land. The attack was consequently postponed until the following day.

That day was equally unpropitious. The storm continued with torrents of rain. The attack was again postponed. In the mean time, the Americans went on strengthening their works; by the time the storm subsided, General Howe deemed them too strong to be easily carried; the attempt, therefore, was relinquished altogether.

What was to be done? The shells thrown from the heights into the town, proved that it was no longer tenable. The fleet was equally exposed. Admiral Shulldham, the successor to Graves, assured Howe that if the Americans maintained possession of the heights, his ships could not remain in the harbor. It was determined, therefore, in a council of war, to evacuate the place as soon as possible. But now came on a humiliating perplexity. The troops, in embarking, would be exposed to a destructive fire. How was this to be prevented? General Howe's pride would not suffer him to make capitulations, he endeavored to work on the fears of the Bostonians, by hinting that if his troops were molested while embarking, he might be obliged to cover their retreat, by setting fire to the town.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. II, p. 228.

### A British Burlesque Turned to Melodrama

The British officers had fitted up a theatre, which was well attended by the troops and Tories. On the evening in question, an afterpiece was to be performed, entitled "The Blockade of Boston," intended as a burlesque on the

patriot army which was beleaguering it. Washington is said to have been represented in it as an awkward lout, equipped with a huge wig, and a long rusty sword, attended by a country booby as orderly sergeant, in rustic garb, with an old firelock seven or eight feet long.

The theatre was crowded, especially by the military. The first piece was over, and the curtain was rising for the farce, when a sergeant made his appearance, and announced that "the alarm guns were firing at Charlestown, and the Yankees attacking Bunker's Hill." At first this was supposed to be a part of the entertainment, until General Howe gave the word, "Officers, to your alarm posts."

Great confusion ensued; every one scrambled out of the theatre as fast as possible. There was, as usual, some shrieking and fainting of the ladies; and the farce of "The Blockade of Boston" had a more serious than comic termination.

The London Chronicle in a sneering comment on Boston affairs gave Burgoyne as the author of this burlesque afterpiece, though perhaps unjustly. "General Burgoyne has opened a theatrical campaign, of which himself is sole manager, being determined to act with the Provincials on the defensive only. Tom Thumb has already been represented; while, on the other hand, the Provincials are preparing to exhibit, early in the spring, 'Measure for Measure.' "

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. II, p. 215.

### **"There Never Existed a More Miserable Set of Beings!"**

Daily preparations were now made by the enemy for departure. By proclamation, the inhabitants were ordered to deliver up all linen and woollen goods, and all other goods, that, in possession of the rebels, would aid them in carrying on the war. Crean Bush, a New York Tory, was authorized to take possession of such goods, and put them on board two of the transports. Under cover of his commission, he and his myrmidons broke open stores, and stripped them of

their contents. Marauding gangs from the fleet and army followed their example, and extended their depredations to private houses. On the 14th, Howe, in a general order, declared that the first soldier caught plundering should be hanged on the spot. Still on the 16th houses were broken open, goods destroyed, and furniture defaced by the troops. Some of the furniture, it is true, belonged to the officers, and it was destroyed because they could neither sell it nor carry it away.

For some days the embarkation of the troops was delayed by adverse winds. Washington, who was imperfectly informed of affairs in Boston, feared that the movements there might be a feint. Determined to bring things to a crisis, he detached a force to Nook's Hill on Saturday the 16th, which threw up a breastwork in the night regardless of the cannonading of the enemy. This commanded Boston Neck, and the south part of the town, and a deserter brought a false report to the British that a general assault was intended.

The embarkation, so long delayed, began with a hurry and confusion at four o'clock in the morning. The harbor of Boston soon presented a striking and tumultuous scene. There were seventy-eight ships and transports casting loose for sea, and eleven or twelve thousand men, soldiers, sailors, and refugees, hurrying to embark; many especially of the latter, with their families and personal effects. The refugees, in fact, labored under greater disadvantages than the king's troops, being obliged to man their own vessels, as sufficient seamen could not be spared from the king's transports. Speaking of those "who had taken upon themselves the style and title of government men" in Boston, and acted an unfriendly part in this great contest, Washington observes:

"By all accounts there never existed a more miserable set of beings than these wretched creatures now are. Taught to believe that the power of Great Britain was superior to all opposition, and that foreign aid, if not, was at hand; they

were even higher and more insulting in their opposition than the Regulars. When the order issued, therefore, for embarking the troops in Boston, no electric shock—no sudden clap of thunder—in a word, the last trump could not have struck them with greater consternation. They were at their wits' end, and conscious of their black ingratitude, chose to commit themselves, in the manner I have above described, to the mercy of the waves at a tempestuous season rather than meet their offended countrymen."

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. II, p. 223.

### **The British Sentry Was a Dummy**

Napoleon is credited with the remark that English soldiers never know when they are whipped, but they had not lapsed into this deplorable degree of ignorance at the time of the Revolution; for when General Howe and Admiral Shuldhham saw these redoubts, they agreed with beautiful unanimity that the town was untenable, and promptly prepared to depart. Nobody pressed them to stay; the Americans did not fire even a single shot to distract their attention, and the British returned the compliment by refraining from firing a single house. It was the greatest moving day that had been known in North America up to that date; but the British did all the work and the Americans looked on, which is unalloyed bliss to one who has no moving to do. Finally an American sentinel found that the British sentry in front of him was a dummy; within a few moments the American flag floated over Boston for the first time.

*George Washington*, John Habberton, p. 94.

### **"The Face of Disorder and Confusion"**

At an early hour of the morning, the troops stationed at Cambridge and Roxbury had paraded, and several regiments under Putnam had embarked in boats, and

dropped down Charles River, to Sewell's Point, to watch the movements of the enemy by land and water. About nine o'clock a large body of troops were seen marching down Bunker's Hill, while boats full of soldiers were putting off for the shipping. Two scouts were sent from the camp to reconnoitre. The works appeared still to be occupied, for sentries were posted about them with shouldered muskets. Observing them to be motionless, the scouts made nearer scrutiny, and discovered them to be mere effigies, set up to delay the advance of the Americans. Pushing on, they found the works deserted, and gave signal of the fact; whereupon, a detachment was sent from the camp to take possession.

Part of Putnam's troops were now sent back to Cambridge; a part were ordered forward to occupy Boston. General Ward, too, with five hundred men, made his way from Roxbury, across the Neck, about which the enemy had scattered caltrops or crow's feet, to impede invasion. The gates were unbarred and thrown open, and the Americans entered in triumph, with drums beating and colors flying.

By ten o'clock the enemy were all embarked and under way: Putnam had taken command of the city, and occupied the important points, and the flag of thirteen stripes, the standard of the Union, floated above all the forts.

On the following day, Washington himself entered the town, where he was joyfully welcomed. He beheld around him sad traces of the devastation caused by the bombardment, though not to the extent that he had apprehended. There were evidences, also, of the haste with which the British had retreated—five pieces of ordnance with their trunnions knocked off, others hastily spiked; others thrown off the wharf.

"General Howe's retreat," writes Washington, "was precipitate beyond anything I could have conceived. The destruction of the stores at Dunbar's camp, after

Braddock's defeat, was but a faint image of what may be seen at Boston; artillery carts cut to pieces in one place, gun carriages in another; shells broke here, shots buried there, and everything carrying with it the face of disorder and confusion as also of distress."

We close this eventful chapter of Washington's history, with the honor decreed to him by the highest authority of his country. On motion of John Adams, who had first moved his nomination as commander-in-chief, a unanimous vote of thanks to him was passed in Congress; and it was ordered that a gold medal be struck, commemorating the evacuation of Boston, bearing the effigy of Washington as its deliverer.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. II, p. 236.

### **"It Takes the Ragged Boys to Do the Fighting"**

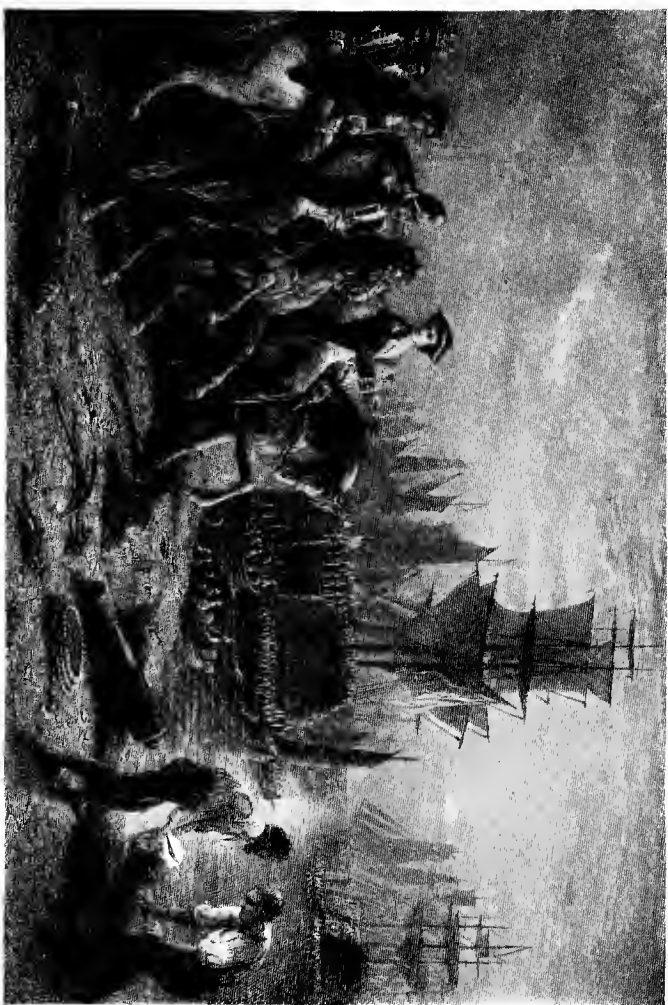
The Rev. Dr. Edward Everett Hale, immortal as the author of "The Man without a Country," related in conversation, many stories of Washington, gathered from the accounts of eye-witnesses who were old people in Dr. Hale's boyhood. Here is one given, as nearly as the writer can remember, in the language of the aged minister-author.

"An old parishioner I had once told me that when Washington entered Boston after its evacuation, on the 17th of March, 1776, he made the best tavern in the town his headquarters. This was at the head of King street, as State street was then called. General Howe also had lived at the same inn. My informant's mother was the inn-keeper's daughter, a little girl running about the house, and naturally interested in all that was going on.

"General Washington, who was exceedingly fond of children, called the little girl to him, and while holding her on his knee, asked:

"'Now that you have seen the soldiers on both sides, which do you like best?'

"The little girl hesitated, but, like the great Washington



*Engraving by J. Godfrey after the Painting by M. A. Waggoner.*

SIR WILLIAM HOWE AND THE BRITISH LEAVING BOSTON





himself, could not tell a lie, she said, with childish honesty,

“‘I like the “red coats” best.’”

“The American general laughed at her frankness, and said, gently:

“‘Yes, my dear, the red-coats do look the best, but it takes the ragged boys to do the fighting.’”

(This anecdote has been authenticated. W. W.)

### **“No Man Ever Commanded under More Difficult Circumstances”**

*(Letter to John Augustine Washington.)*

“Cambridge, 31 March, 1776.

“*Dear Brother:*

. . . . “The want of arms and powder is not peculiar to Virginia. This country, of which doubtless you have heard large and flattering accounts, is more deficient in both than you can conceive. I have been here months together, with (what will be scarcely believed) not thirty rounds of musket cartridges to a man; and have been obliged to submit to all the insults of the enemy’s cannon for want of powder, keeping what little we had for pistol distance. Another thing has been done, which, added to the above, will put it in the power of this army to say, what perhaps no other with justice ever could say. We have maintained our ground against the enemy, under this want of powder, and we have disbanded one army, and recruited another, within musket shot of two and twenty regiments, the flower of the British army, whilst our force has been but little if any superior to theirs; and, at last, have beaten them into a shameful and precipitate retreat out of a place the strongest by nature on this continent, and strengthened and fortified at an enormous expense. . . .

“I believe I may with great truth affirm, that no man perhaps since the first institution of armies ever commanded

one under more difficult circumstances than I have done. To enumerate the particulars would fill a volume. Many of my difficulties and distresses were of so peculiar a cast, that, in order to conceal them from the enemy, I was obliged to conceal them from my friends, and indeed from my own army, thereby subjecting my conduct to interpretations unfavorable to my character, especially by those at a distance, who could not in the smallest degree be acquainted with the springs that governed it. I am happy, however, to find, and to hear from different quarters, that my reputation stands fair, that my conduct hitherto has given universal satisfaction. The addresses which I have received, and which I suppose will be published, from the General Court of this colony, and from the selectmen of Boston upon the evacuation of the town, and my approaching departure from the colony, exhibit a pleasing testimony of their approbation of my conduct, and of their personal regard, which I have found in various other instances, and which, in retirement, will afford many comfortable reflections.

“General Charles Lee, I suppose, is with you before this. He is the first officer, in military knowledge and experience, we have in the whole army. He is zealously attached to the cause, honest and well-meaning, but rather fickle and violent, I fear, in his temper. However, as he possesses an uncommon share of good sense and spirit, I congratulate my countrymen upon his appointment to that department. As I am now nearly at the end of my eighth page, I think it time to conclude; especially, as I set out with prefacing the little time I had for friendly correspondences. I shall only add, therefore, my affectionate regards to my sister and the children, and compliments to friends; and that I am, with every sentiment of true affection, your loving brother and faithful friend,”

[G. WASHINGTON].

**"Execrable Parricides!"**

Washington did not linger over his victory. Even while the British fleet still hung about the harbor he began to send troops to New York to make ready for the next attack. He entered Boston in order to see that every precaution was taken against the spread of smallpox, and then prepared to depart himself. Two ideas, during his first winter of conflict, had taken possession of his mind, and undoubtedly influenced profoundly his future course. One was the conviction that the struggle must be fought out to the bitter end, and must bring either subjugation or complete independence. He wrote in February: "With respect to myself, I have never entertained an idea of an accommodation, since I heard of the measures which were adopted in consequence of the Bunker Hill fight"; and at an earlier date he said: "I hope my countrymen (of Virginia) will rise superior to any losses the whole navy of Great Britain may bring on them, and that the destruction of Norfolk and threatened devastation of other places will have no other effect than to unite the whole country in one indissoluble band against a nation which seems to be lost to every sense of virtue and those feelings which distinguish a civilized people from the most barbarous savages." With such thoughts he sought to make Congress appreciate the probable long duration of the struggle, and he bent every energy to giving permanency to his army, and decisiveness to each campaign. The other idea which had grown in his mind during the weary siege was that the Tories were thoroughly dangerous and deserved scant mercy. In his second letter to Gage he refers to them, with the frankness which characterized him when he felt strongly, as "execrable parricides," and he made ready to treat them with the utmost severity at New York and elsewhere. When Washington was aroused there was a stern and relentless side to his character, in keeping with the force and strength

which were his chief qualities. His attitude on this point seems harsh now when the old Tories no longer look very dreadful. But they were dangerous then, and Washington, with his honest hatred of all that seemed to partake of meanness or treason, proposed to put them down and render them harmless, being well convinced, after his clear-sighted fashion, that war was not peace, and that mildness to domestic foes was sadly misplaced.

His errand to New England was now done and well done. His victory was won, everything was settled at Boston; and so, having sent his army forward, he started for New York, to meet the harder trials that still awaited him.

*George Washington*, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. I, p. 152.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE STARS AND STRIPES AND THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

#### The Commander-in-chief Invited to Confer with Congress

When President [of Congress] Hancock, under date of May 16, wrote to the commander-in-chief advising him of the resolution of Congress requesting his presence in Philadelphia, he added:

"I request the favor that you will please to honor me with your and your lady's company at my house, where I have a bed at your service, and where every endeavor on my part and Mrs. Hancock's will be exerted to make your abode agreeable. I reside in an airy, open part of the city, in Arch street, corner of Fourth street."

Washington, however, on his arrival at Philadelphia, received a note from Mr. Hancock, expressing his sorrow that it was not in his power to wait on him in person on account of a severe fit of the gout. From this note it does not appear that the General and Mrs. Washington availed themselves of the invitation.

*Itinerary of General Washington from June 15, 1775, to December 23, 1783, William S. Baker, p. 40.*

#### Going to Philadelphia

Washington left New York on May 21 and arrived at Philadelphia on the 23d, at two o'clock in the afternoon, stopping on the way at Amboy, New Jersey, "to view," as he wrote to General Schuyler, "the ground, and such places on Staten Island contiguous to it, as may be proper for works of defense."

*Itinerary of General Washington from June 15, 1775, to December 23, 1783. William S. Baker, p. 39.*

### Consulting with Congress on the Coming Campaign

Agreeable to order, General Washington attended in Congress, and after some conference with him,

“*Resolved*, that he be directed to attend again to-morrow.”

*Journal of Congress*, May, 24, 1776.

Agreeable to order, General Washington attended, and after some conference with him,

“*Resolved*, That a committee be appointed to confer with his excellency, General Washington, Major-general Gates, Brigadier-general Mifflin, and to concert a plan of military operations for the ensuing campaign.”

*Journal of Congress*, May 25, 1776.

### Attended by Indians, Washington Reviews the Troops

On Monday afternoon (May 27) General Washington, the members of Congress, Gen. Gates and Mifflin, reviewed the four battalions, the rifle battalion, the light horse, and three artillery companies of the city militia, amounting to near 2500 men, when they went through their manœuvres to general satisfaction. At the same time two battalions of the Continental troops were reviewed by the General. The Indians who are come to town on business with the Congress, attended the General in reviewing the militia.

*Pennsylvania Gazette*, May 29, 1776.

### General Washington and the Stars and Stripes

The writer is indebted to the grandsons of Betsy Ross, Mr. William J. Canby and Mr. George Canby, for interesting and valuable information relative to the making of the first flag. Congress appointed General Washington, Colonel George Ross and Robert Morris a committee “authorized to design a suitable flag for the nation,”

and they called upon Mrs. Ross, who was conducting an upholstery business on Arch Street, below Third, in Philadelphia. Washington had frequently called upon Mrs. Ross before his appointment as commander-in-chief of the army, and knew her skill with the needle, having employed her to embroider his shirt ruffles and do needle-work of other kinds.

Mrs. Ross was shown a rough drawing of the flag, which was explained by General Washington. She objected to the six-pointed stars in the design, and suggested that they ought to have but five points. The sketch was redrawn in pencil by General Washington, the stars were changed to five-pointed, and other minor alterations were made.

The fact that in the original drawing the stars were six-pointed is strong evidence that they were not derived from the Washington arms, for those on his escutcheon were five-pointed, but one ingenious writer quotes Washington as saying that "he preferred a star that would not be an exact copy of those on his coat of arms, and that he also thought a six-pointed star would be easier to make." Mrs. Ross demonstrated the ease of making a five-pointed star, by folding a piece of paper and producing one by a single clip of her scissors.

*The Stars and Stripes and Other American Flags*, Peleg D. Harrison, p. 62.

### Ordering the Flag Made

So they needed another flag—a real liberty flag. In June, 1776, only a few weeks before the great Declaration, a committee of three persons, General Washington, Robert Morris (who afterwards became the money manager of the Revolution) and Colonel George Ross, called on Mrs. Ross, the widow of Colonel Ross's nephew, to have a banner made. The members of the committee had evidently availed themselves of the advice of Dr. Benjamin Franklin, for he was interested in flags and had been chairman of the previous flag committee. Washington and his

friends seemed to have a pretty good idea of what they wanted.

It has been shown how the idea of the Stars and Stripes had been growing up among all the queer designs that had been flung to the breezes during those years of turmoil and trouble with the Mother Country. The thirteen colonies had often been represented, on sea and land, by thirteen stripes, and sometimes by thirteen white stars in a blue sky or field. These stars were generally five-pointed. The committee seems to have agreed upon placing the thirteen stars in a circle, in a blue canton. Washington, in his drawing, had made the stars six-pointed, it is said, because he wanted to make the stars *different* from those in his own coat-of-arms, which were five-pointed! It is often stated that Washington secured the design for our flag from his own coat-of-arms. No doubt Franklin suggested this also. But there had been several flags made of thirteen stripes, and quite a number of star standards appeared about this time. If his coat-of-arms had really resembled the flag, that would have been the very reason why Washington would *not* have allowed it to be copied. He was not that kind of a man. There is nothing that can be quoted from what Washington ever said or wrote, of all that is left to us, that even hints at such an idea. Indeed, much that he wrote seems rather to contradict the notion of his copying his coat-of-arms. . . .

When General Washington and his secret or self-appointed committee needed some one to make up the flag they had planned, they naturally went to the bright and skillful young "Widow Ross," as she was sometimes called. Besides, Betsy was a niece, by marriage, of Colonel Ross, one of the so-called committee. Washington laid the design before the blooming young woman, with his accustomed gallantry. When Mrs. Ross saw the six-pointed star in the drawing, she took a piece of paper, folded it, made one snip of the scissors, unfolded it and smilingly held up a perfect five-pointed star.



The men were delighted with her deftness and skill, and felt that the bright little woman was just the right person to whom to entrust the making of the wonderful new flag. They told her what they desired—thirteen red and white stripes, with the red at the top and bottom of the flag, which would make seven red stripes and six white. The canton to be a blue square, extending from the top down over the seven bars and stopping at the eighth, a white stripe. In this blue field was a circle of thirteen white stars. The description given by Congress was of “a constellation,” or a group of stars. The story is told that John Adams wished to have the stars arranged in the form of the star-group, Lyra, which is the shape of a lyre or harp, as there were just thirteen stars in that constellation. But they could not arrange it to look well, so they decided on the circle of stars. As there is no end to a circle, they hoped that the new nation that they were trying to organize would also be without end—that it would live until the end of time.

*The Story of the American Flag*, Wayne Whipple, p. 44.

### Stars and Stripes Not from Washington's Coat-of-arms

That neither the stars nor stripes were derived from the Washington coat-of-arms is shown by Washington himself, in a grand sentiment on our national flag, which he gave in these words:

“We take the star from Heaven, the red from our mother country, separating it by white stripes, thus showing that we have separated from her, and the white stripes shall go down to posterity representing liberty.”

It will be noticed that the suggestion expressed elsewhere, that the stripes on the continental Union Flag, the immediate predecessor of our national emblem, may have been formed by placing six white stripes across the red ensign of the United Kingdom, accords with what Washington said.

Historian Benson J. Lossing would never believe that the Washington arms were the beginning of the flag, and so expressed himself in a letter to Thomas Gibbons. He thought the stripes may have been suggested by the flag of the English East India Company, with which the colonists in the seaports had long been familiar.

*The Stars and Stripes and Other American Flags*, Peleg D. Harrison, p. 58.

### Drawing up and Discussing the Declaration

On the first day of July, 1776, with Benjamin Harrison in the chair, the resolution was brought up for action. The DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE had been drawn up by Thomas Jefferson, who had been appointed chairman of the committee. He was a very young man at this time, a delegate from Virginia, not very much of a speaker, though his pen had already become known not only as that of a "ready writer" but of an able writer as well. Jefferson had desired John Adams to draw up the documents; but Adams, as far-sighted as he had been when he had secured the appointment of Washington as commander-in-chief of the army, and for very much the same reasons, insisted upon his young colleague doing the work. In his autobiography John Adams gave the following reasons for declining to do the work, and for his insistence that Jefferson should do it:

"1. That he was a Virginian and I a Massachusetten-sian. 2. That he was a Southern man and I a Northern one. 3. That I had been so obnoxious for my early and constant zeal in promoting the measure, that every draft of mine would undergo a more severe scrutiny and criticism in Congress than one of his composition. 4. And lastly, and that would be reason enough if there were no other, I had a great opinion of the elegance of his pen and none at all of my own. I therefore insisted that no hesitation should be made on his part. He accordingly took the minutes, and in a day or two produced me his draft."

Richard Henry Lee, [who had made the motion for the Declaration] was absent on that first day of July, owing to the illness in his family, and John Adams was called upon to defend the resolution he had seconded. Perhaps he was not the fiery, magnetic speaker that Lee was, but he was a man of greater intellect, and his speech was a powerful one. Doubtless many of those who are reading this page have declaimed in their school days portions of that speech, or supposed portions, before admiring audiences, and have declared that "sink or swim, survive or perish," they were unhesitatingly in favor of independence. Samuel Adams of Massachusetts, Dr. Witherspoon of New Jersey, Edward Rutledge of South Carolina, and others also spoke warmly in its favor.

The resolution was opposed by some, for what measure ever yet existed to which all men agreed? The strongest speech in opposition was made by John Dickinson, who brought forward points that in one form or another have been urged against every new movement since the world began.

"The country would not be any stronger, proposed alliances with France, Spain, or other foreign nations were all uncertain. There would be no hope of future favors from Great Britain. The colonies themselves had no settled government, and first all these details should be arranged, and *then* America might take her place among the nations of the world"—all of which was not without weight, but after all was very much like the consent of the anxious mother for her boy to enter the water *after* he had learned to swim; or telling a young teacher or physician that he will be employed *after* he shall have had some experience. Learning comes by experience, and centuries ago a writer declared that all such reasons as those advanced by John Dickinson against any movement which of itself *was right*, would usually prevent the measure itself from being entered upon. "He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap."

The resolution declaring the colonies to be free and

independent was unanimously adopted on the *second day of July, 1776*. Nine colonies the preceding day had voted in favor of it. New York was silent because . . . her delegate had not been instructed. Pennsylvania voted nay, and so did South Carolina. Delaware also was counted in the negative, although one of her delegates cast his vote in favor of adopting the resolution. The final vote was unanimous, at least as far as twelve colonies were concerned, for the New York delegates, though not opposed to it, did not feel that they ought to vote for it.

The form drawn up by Jefferson was modified and slightly changed, and after a full discussion, was adopted, July 4th, 1776.

*A Short History of the American Revolution*, Everett Tomlinson, p. 89.

[Washington returned to New York, June 6, 1776.]

### **A Badly Armed, Undisciplined, Disorderly Rabble**

The patriot military forces of New York, when General Howe first arrived, were only about ten thousand. His delay of nearly two months allowed them the opportunity to increase this number. Enthusiasm and rumors soon had their numbers up to forty-five thousand or fifty thousand. It had seemed to both the patriots and their Congress that before long they must surely have that number. Many expected more. But by the actual returns made by Washington, his forces, all told, were only 20,275. Of these the sick were so numerous that those fit for duty were only about fourteen thousand. The large sick-list was apparently the result of shockingly unsanitary conditions, which for long afterwards were characteristic of the patriot camps; and in winter they were always afflicted with the smallpox. Besides disease which was so prevalent among them, they were a most badly armed, undisciplined, disorderly rabble, marauding on the inhabitants and committing all kinds of irregularities. Except a few troops, like Smallwood's Marylanders, they were for the most part merely a collection

of squads of farmers and militia bringing with them the guns they had in their houses.

*The True Story of the American Revolution*, Sydney George Fisher, p. 309.

### Conspiracy to Kill or Kidnap Washington

The great aim of the British, at present, was to get possession of New York and the Hudson, and make them the basis of military operations. This they hoped to effect on the arrival of a powerful armament, hourly expected, and designed for operations on the seaboard.

At this critical juncture there was an alarm of a conspiracy among the Tories in the city and on Long Island, suddenly to take up arms and co-operate with the British troops on their arrival. The wildest reports were in circulation concerning it. Some of the Tories were to break down the King's Bridge, others were to blow up the magazines, spike the guns, and massacre all the field-officers. Washington was to be killed or delivered up to the enemy. Some of his own body-guard were said to be in the plot.

Corbie's tavern, near Washington's quarters, was a kind of rendezvous of the conspirators. There one Gilbert Forbes, a gunsmith, "a short, thick man, with a white coat," enlisted men, gave them money, and "swore them on the book to secrecy." From this house a correspondence was kept up with Governor Tryon on shipboard through a "mulatto-colored negro, dressed in blue clothes." At this tavern it was supposed Washington's body-guards were tampered with. Thomas Hickey, one of the guards, a dark-complexioned man, five feet six inches high, and well set, was said not only to be enlisted, but to have aided in corrupting his comrades; among others, Greene the drummer, and Johnson the fifer.

It was further testified before the committee, that one Sergeant Graham, an old soldier, formerly of the royal artillery, had been employed by Governor Tryon to prowl round and survey the grounds and works about the city,

and on Long Island, and that, on information thus procured, a plan of operations had been concerted. On the arrival of the fleet, a man-of-war should cannonade the battery at Red Hook; while that was doing, a detachment of the army should land below with cannon, and by a circuitous march surprise and storm the works on Long Island. The shipping then, with the remainder of the army, were to divide, one part to run up the Hudson, the other up the East River; troops were to land above New York, secure the pass at King's Bridge, and cut off all communications between city and country.

Much of the evidence given was of a dubious kind. It was certain that persons had been secretly enlisted, and sworn to hostile operations, but Washington did not think that any regular plan had been digested by the conspirators.

"The matter," writes he, "I am in hopes, by a timely discovery, will be suppressed."

According to the mayor's own admission before the committee, he had been cognizant of attempts to enlist Tories and corrupt Washington's guards, though he declared that he had discountenanced them. He had, on one occasion, also, at the request of Governor Tryon, paid money for him to Gilbert Forbes, the gunsmith, for rifles and round-bored guns which he had already furnished, and for others he was to make. He had done so, however (according to his account), with great reluctance, and after much hesitation and delay, warning the gunsmith that he would be hanged if found out. The mayor, with a number of others, was detained in prison to await a trial.

Thomas Hickey, the individual of Washington's guard, was tried before a court-martial. He was an Irishman and had been a deserter from the British army. The court-martial found him guilty of mutiny and sedition, and treacherous correspondence with the enemy, and sentenced him to be hanged.

The sentence was approved by Washington, and was car-

ried promptly into effect, in the most solemn and impressive manner, to serve as a warning and an example in this time of treachery and danger. On the morning of June 28th, all the officers and men off duty, belonging to the brigades of Heath, Spencer, Stirling and Scott, assembled under arms at their respective parades at 10 o'clock, and marched thence to the grounds. Twenty men from each brigade, with bayonets fixed, guarded the prisoner to the place of execution, which was a field near the Bowery Lane. There he was hanged in the presence, we are told, of near twenty thousand persons.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. II, p. 289.

### **"A Most Barbarous and Infernal Plot"**

"Since Friday last, a most barbarous and infernal plot has been discovered among the Tories in New York. Two of General Washington's guards are concerned; a third whom they tempted to join them made the first discovery. The general report of their design is as follows: Upon the arrival of the British troops, they were to murder all the staff-officers, blow up the magazines, and secure all the passes of the town. Gilbert Forbes, a gunsmith in the Broadway, was taken between two and three o'clock on Saturday morning and carried before our Congress who were then sitting. He refused to make any discovery, upon which he was sent to jail. The Reverend Mr. Livingston went to see him early in the morning, and told him he was very sorry to find he had been concerned, that his time was very short, not having above three days to live, and advised him to prepare himself. This had the desired effect; and he requested to be carried before Congress again, promising to discover all he knew. Several have since been taken, between twenty and thirty, among them the mayor. They are all now in confinement. Their party, it is said, consisted of about five hundred."

[Two other extracts from newspapers of the time will

explain the methods employed by the angry soldiers to protect their leader and bring the leaders to justice.]

"Yesterday (23) the mayor was examined twice, and returned prisoner under a strong guard. We have now thirty-four prisoners, and many more, it is expected, will be taken up. A party of our men went over to Long Island on Saturday last to take up some of the Tories; they returned yesterday, and brought to town one Downing, who is charged with being in the hellish plot. They took six more prisoners and put them in Jamaica jail, on Long Island. The Tories made some resistance, and fired on our men in the woods; our men then returned the fire, wounding one man mortally; they then called for quarter."

"This forenoon (June 28) was executed in a field between the Colonels M'Dougall and Huntington's camp, near the Bowery-Lane, New York, in the presence of near twenty thousand spectators, a soldier belonging to his Excellency General Washington's guards, for mutiny and conspiracy; being one of these who formed, and was soon to have put in execution, that horrid plot of assassinating the staff-officers, blowing up the magazines, and securing the passes of the town on the arrival of the hungry ministerial myrmidons. During the execution, Kip, the moon-curser, suddenly sank down and expired instantly."

*Pennsylvania Journal*, (newspaper) accounts.

### **In a Board of Treasury, Flying Camp, and Barn Hospital**

Having received a plain education and left a good home, I determined to try my fortune in a strange place and support myself, independent of friends, whom I was to leave, and who were as opulent as the farmers of that day generally were. I soon discovered, after taking my station in office, on a salary of five hundred dollars per annum, that there was little difficulty in the way of success. Soon after this appointment I was, with the other clerks in the different offices, appointed a signer of Continental money in



order to help our salaries; this was of great service. We continued to sign the bills until a hundred dollar note would scarcely give a hearty man a dinner; but the signing answered the purpose for the time being and I was thankful.

I continued with the Board of Treasury, then occupying a house at the corner of Fourth and Arch streets, Philadelphia, very differently organized from what it is now at the city of Washington.

Previous to my settlement in this city, or thought of doing so, to wit, in the spring of 1776, Congress resolved, at the request of General Washington, to raise, for the short time of six months, an auxiliary force to be denominated a Flying Camp, to be dressed in hunting shirts, which was soon accomplished, composed mostly of young men. A near relative of mine obtained a commission of lieutenant; he being at that time a stripling of a boy, but full of zeal, he prevailed on his brother and myself to enlist in his company, promising me the appointment of sergeant. Elated with the idea of being a soldier I at once signed the articles and prepared to join the company at their rendezvous at Chester Town. The regiment, commanded by Colonel William Richardson, was soon completed, and was ready to march by the first of July, and were ordered to Fort Washington in the North [Hudson] River, twelve miles above the city of New York.

It so happened that we reached that city on the Fourth of July, being the anniversary of my own birth, as well as the day Congress, then in session, declared the United States free and independent—a glorious day long to be remembered. Before ten days had expired (from taking up the line of march), we were safely encamped at Fort Washington, our place of destination, a short time before the British fleet, commanded by Admiral Lord Howe, and the army, by Sir Henry Clinton, appeared off Sandy Hook, and took possession of the city of New York. . . . Fort Washington [was] on Manhattan and Fort Lee, on the

Jersey shore, directly opposite. Fort Washington had a garrison of one thousand men commanded by Colonel McDougall.

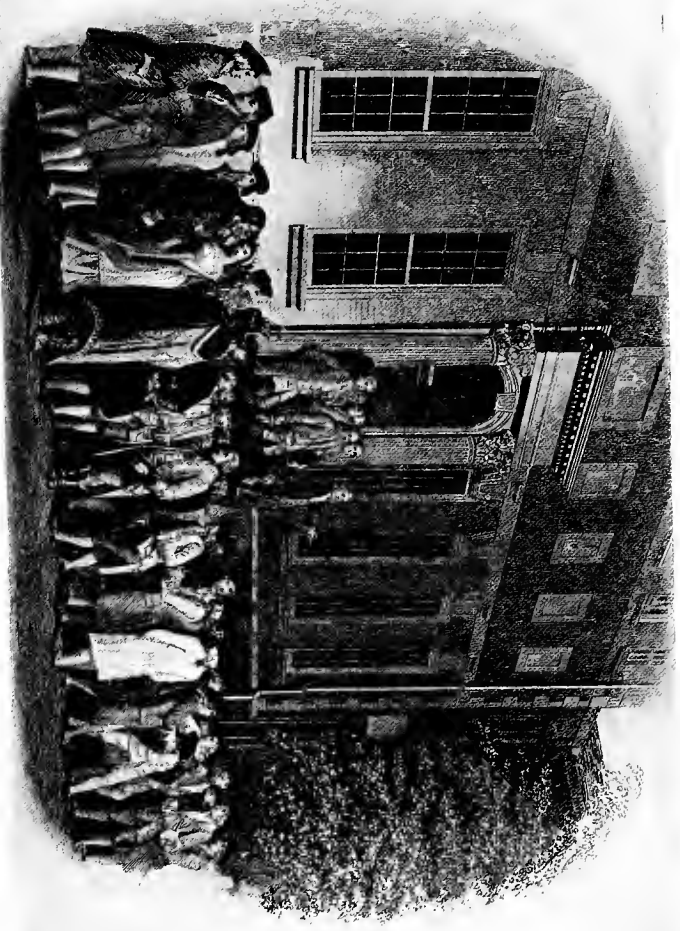
The soldiers belonging to the regiment to which I belonged, being thinly clad in hunting shirts, became very sickly as the fall approached. As I was well and active, I was ordered over to Hackensack, in Jersey, in charge of all the invalids belonging to the regiment, and succeeded in securing good quarters in a large barn, belonging to a farmer close by; I took quarters myself in the family owning said farm, who treated me with great kindness during my sojourn. I had the misfortune to bury the most of my companions far from their own home, yet [I was] not dismayed. Before the army retired into winter quarters, and the Flying Camp discharged, myself and those who survived (our time being about to expire) wended our way back to our native homes much fatigued and discouraged.

*Reminiscences*, in manuscript, of Cornelius Comegys, through courtesy of his great-grandson, G. Albert Smyth.

### How the Declaration Was Received in New York

Washington hailed the Declaration with joy. It is true, it was but a formal recognition of a state of things which had long existed, but it put an end to all those temporizing hopes of reconciliation which had clogged the military action of the country.

On the 9th of July, he caused it to be read at six o'clock in the evening, at the head of each brigade of the army. "The general hopes," said he in his orders, "that this important event will serve as a fresh incentive to every officer and soldier, to act with fidelity and courage, as knowing that now the peace and safety of his country depend, under God, solely on the success of our arms; and that he is now in the service of a state, possessed of sufficient power to reward his merit, and advance him to the highest honors of a free country."



*From the Engraving by J. McWhorter.*

ANNOUNCING THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE FROM THE STEPS OF  
INDEPENDENCE HALL, PHILADELPHIA



The excitable populace of New York were not content with the ringing of bells to proclaim their joy. There was a leaden statue of George III in the Bowling Green, in front of the fort. Since kingly rule is at an end, why retain its effigy? On the same evening, therefore, the statue was pulled down amid the shouts of the multitude, and broken up to be run into bullets "to be used in the cause of independence."

Some of the soldiery having been implicated in this popular effervescence, Washington censured it in general orders, as having much the appearance of a riot and a want of discipline, and the army was forbidden to indulge in any irregularities of the kind. It was his constant effort to inspire his countrymen in arms with his own elevated ideas of the cause in which they were engaged, and to make them feel that it was no ordinary warfare, admitting of vulgar passions and perturbations. "The general hopes and trusts," said he, "that every officer and man will endeavor so to live and act as becomes a Christian soldier, defending the dearest rights and liberties of his country."

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. II, p. 305.

### Statue of George III Melted into Bullets

The New Yorkers, now that they knew something definite about their political status, made themselves entirely equal to the situation by such means as are usually employed by civilians on patriotic occasions; that is, they hurrahed, rang bells, and built bonfires. . . .

But neither the resolution, the Declaration, the general order, nor the enthusiasm secured Washington the re-enforcements that he so greatly needed. The works in and opposite the city and at Fort Washington, on the upper end of Manhattan Island, did not prevent two warships from sailing up the Hudson, frightening the city nearly into hysterics as they passed, and making themselves at home in that wide portion of the river known as Haverstraw

Bay. This naval venture, however, had the good effects of stimulating activity on all the defenses along the Hudson and causing Washington to send George Clinton, a militia brigadier of great ability, to discipline the Tories up the river.

About this time the occupation of being a Tory was almost as uncomfortable as that of being commander-in-chief; but this fact did not cause Washington to comport himself sympathetically towards the king's friends. The Tories meant well, at the start; their only fault was, that they were so loyal to the king that their hearts were too much for their heads. Had they remained neutral in word and act, they would have had no trouble; but as talk, all theories to the contrary notwithstanding, is the ruling passion of humanity, their tongues wagged incessantly, and, being compelled to play a double part in order to show their loyalty to one side and save their property from the other, they rapidly developed into the most accomplished and exasperating liars that the country had yet known.

*George Washington, John Habberton, p. 102.*

### **"The Times That Try Men's Souls"**

Franklin's faith all through "the times that try men's souls" (as Thomas Paine wrote concerning this very crisis) was ever cheerful. During those days of poverty and disaster he never lost hope. When he heard bad news he exclaimed: "It will come all right in the end." He proved his sincerity by putting \$15,000 (the amount awarded him by the Pennsylvania Assembly) into the cause of liberty—devoting the people's gift to their country's good.

When it was too late the English ministers began to see that they had blundered. Soon after the Declaration of Independence, Lord Howe wrote to Franklin advising a conference which should bring about a reconciliation between Mother England and her daughter in America. Franklin wrote back:

"Long did I endeavor, with unfeigned and unwearied zeal, to preserve from breaking that fine and noble China vase, the British Empire; for I knew that, once broken, the separate parts could not retain even their share of the strength or value that existed in the whole, and that a perfect reunion of their parts could scarce ever be hoped for."

At a conference which took place between Lord Howe, representing England, and Franklin, John Adams and Edward Rutledge, for the colonies, Lord Howe expressed a deep fraternal feeling for them saying, "If America should fail, I should feel and lament it like the loss of a brother."

Franklin bowed and calmly said: "We will do our utmost endeavor to spare your lordship that mortification."

*The Franklin Story-Calendar, Wayne Whipple, November 13 to 26, 1910.*

### "Unpack His Heart with Words?"

In the summer of 1776, at New York, when he was at the head of the Army of the Revolution, the following appeared among the General Orders of August 3d:

"The General is sorry to be informed, that the foolish and wicked practice of profane cursing and swearing, a vice heretofore little known in an American army, is growing into fashion; he hopes the officers will, by example as well as influence, endeavor to check it, and that both they and the men will reflect, that we can have little hope of the blessing of Heaven on our arms, if we insult it by our impiety and folly; added to this, it is a vice so mean and low, without any temptation, that every man of sense and character detests and despises it."

Is it probable, nay, is it possible, that the author of these orders ever lost or forgot the character and principles of his youth and manhood from which they came, so that in later years he became accustomed to

"unpack *his* heart with words,  
And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,"

or emphasize the utterances of excited passion with habitual profanity? I think not!

*Libels on Washington*, Geo. H. Moore, p. 6.

**"George Washington, Esq., etc., etc."**

"We expect a bloody summer in New York and Canada," wrote General Washington to his brother, after his return to New York. . . .

British men-of-war began to arrive in New York Harbor and to land soldiers by thousands on Staten Island. General Howe and his brother, Lord Howe, on their arrival, found Washington in possession of New York and two small forts, named for the two generals, Washington and Lee, were built above the city on opposite sides of the Hudson, to prevent the British fleet from ascending that wide stream. But Washington's ever vanishing forces were inadequate to guard and hold New York and the surrounding country, separated as it was by great rivers. Lord Howe had come with full pardoning powers from King George. He tried to open communication with the commander-in-chief of the colonial army, sending a messenger with a letter addressed to "Mr." Washington. This General Washington's secretary refused to receive. Then an officer arrived at Washington's headquarters with a communication for "George Washington, Esq., etc., etc." Though the officer was received with careful courtesy this letter also was declined.

"But the 'etc., etc.,' implies *everything*," protested the bearer of it.

"It may also mean *anything*!" said Washington, laughing.

Then he added that the "pardoning power" of Lord Howe would be of no avail, for there was nothing to pardon, and, in fact, no pardon had been asked.

Of course, the form of address on a letter was a trifling thing—but Washington comprehended that he represented



the rising young republic, and England must be made to realize this. Lord Howe, at least, recognized Washington's character and the justice of his claim to courteous treatment, which Gage had been incapable of seeing, for he wrote back to England that they might as well give "General" Washington his proper title. But nothing came of the Howes' attempted negotiations to end the war.

Washington's army was now drawn from a wider range of territory than that of New England and the South. Of the difficulties besetting the young commander, John Adams once said:

"It requires more serenity of temper, a deeper understanding, and more courage than fell to the lot of Marlborough, to ride in this whirlwind."

*The Washington Story-Calendar*, Wayne Whipple, September 4 to 10, 1910.

## CHAPTER XV

### DEFEATS AND RETREATS

#### General Howe Turns the Tables

Howe and his brother were experienced military commanders. They had the aid of Clinton and Cornwallis, both of whom were good generals, and over thirty thousand well armed soldiers—men who fought for a living—while Washington had less than eighteen thousand, most of whom knew nothing of war, while many had no muskets to fight with. On the other hand, Washington had the advantage of position. He not only held the city and the forts on the Hudson, but he had possession of Brooklyn Heights on Long Island directly opposite the city on the south. General Howe, with his army, was on Staten Island. He saw that if he could take Brooklyn Heights, and plant his cannon there, he could drive Washington out of New York, just as Washington, by seizing Dorchester Heights, had driven him out of Boston.

General Putnam was in command of the Heights with a force of nine thousand men. Believing that the British meant to attack him, he sent about half his force to meet the enemy. The British, twenty thousand strong, or nearly five to one of the Americans, came across from Staten Island and landing on the southwestern shore of Long Island began their march toward the Heights. They soon met and defeated the little army sent against them, in what was called the battle of Long Island (August 27, 1776). They then got ready to besiege Putnam.

Putnam with his whole army would certainly have been captured if it had not been for Washington's energy and skill. During the night a dense fog came up. Washington

took advantage of it and succeeded in getting all the men across the river in boats to New York. In the morning, when the British commander stretched out his hand to take the "nest of rebels," as he called it, he got the nest indeed, but it was empty—the birds had flown.

*The Leading Facts of American History*, D. H. Montgomery, p. 170.

### The Masterly Retreat from Long Island

The next day brought the heavy rain with which a merciful Providence almost invariably blesses the wounded and weary after a great battle. There was some skirmishing and cannonading, and an appearance of intention to carry the works by regular approach. A heavy fog enveloped everything on the 28th, but when it lifted for a moment there were business indications about the fleet off Staten Island. As there was nothing to prevent the ships doing in East River as the enemy had done between the two lines two days before, a council of war determined to evacuate the Long Island lines. In spite of the fog, all water craft on both rivers were brought around to the Brooklyn ferry landing by dark. . . . On their arrival, they were manned by the Marblehead fishermen and sailors who composed an entire Massachusetts regiment, while Washington, who, like all other sensible men, had learned that the only way to have a thing done to suit him was to do it himself, superintended the embarkation. General Mifflin, with eight hundred fresh troops and the remnants of three regiments that had suffered severely in the recent engagement, manned the lines, while the remaining eight thousand men, with all their stores and *impedimenta*, retreated to the ferry, the rear being covered by a few light guns commanded by Captain Alexander Hamilton, who later became one of the biggest guns in the American political field. . . .

Mifflin went back to the lines, and held them until his own retreat was ordered, when his detachment quietly

and safely crossed the river, Washington himself moving with the extreme rear. About this time the Reliable Contraband makes his first appearance in American military history. He was sent by his owner, residing near the ferry, to inform the British of the retreat, but he struck a Hessian outpost; the Hessians did not understand English, much less Congo-Brooklyn-English, and the man and brother had not enjoyed the modern opportunities of his race for attending universities and studying German, so he was put under guard till daylight, and when he finally made himself understood and the British hurried to the ferry, they secured only an independent rear guard of three thieves. . . .

Blame for the defeat on Long Island has been heaped upon numerous people who did not deserve any share in it; Greene has been charged with the full responsibility for the pass at the left of the ridge being unguarded, although he had not, up to the time he fell sick, been able to do much more than look to his inner line. Putman and Sullivan have been blamed, although neither knew the ground. Washington, as commander-in-chief, has been blamed for everything connected with the affair, except the existence of Long Island. The author of this volume stakes his reputation, as a military critic, on the opinion that the blame really and exclusively belongs to Lord Howe, who had altogether too many men to allow the Americans a fair show. *Fiat justitia, ruat coelum!* The credit for the retreat has been almost equally divided between Washington and Providence, which is about the square thing, for although Providence is the sole supplier of heavy fogs in East River, . . . it was Washington who availed himself of the heaven-sent covering.

*George Washington*, John Habberton, p. 111.

### **In a Tempest of Anger at Kip's Bay**

Washington, looking beyond the confusion of the moment, saw that he had gained much by delay, and had his



*Engraved by Ridgeway from the Original by Chappel.*

LORD STIRLING AT THE BATTLE OF LONG ISLAND



own plan well defined. He wrote: "We have not only delayed the operations of the campaign till it is too late to effect any capital incursion into the country, but have drawn the enemy's forces to one point. . . . It would be presumption to draw out our young troops into open ground against their superiors both in number and discipline, and I have never spared the spade and pick-axe." Every one else, however, saw only past defeat and present peril.

The British ships gradually made their way up the river, until it became apparent that they intended to surround and cut off the American army. Washington made preparations to withdraw, but uncertainty of information came near rendering his precautions futile. September 11th the men-of-war opened fire, and troops were landed near Kip's Bay. The militia in the breastworks at that point had been at Brooklyn and gave way at once, communicating their panic to two Connecticut regiments. Washington, galloping down to the scene of battle, came upon the disordered and flying troops. He dashed in among them, but even while he was trying to rally them they broke again on the appearance of some sixty or seventy of the enemy, and ran in all directions. In a tempest of anger Washington drew his pistols, struck the fugitives with his sword, and was only forced from the field by one of his officers seizing the bridle of his horse and dragging him away from the British, now within a hundred yards of the spot.

*George Washington*, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. I, p. 163.

### **"No Time for the Army to Lose Their General"**

On September 15, a group of horsemen, occupying a slight eminence of ground on the island of Manhattan, were gazing eastward. Below and nearer the water were spread lines of soldiers behind intrenchments, while from three men-of-war lying in the river came a heavy cannonade

that swept the shore line and spread over the water a pall of smoke which, as it drifted to leeward, obscured the Long Island shore from view.

"'Tis evidently a feint, your Excellency," presently asserted one of the observers, "to cover a genuine attack elsewhere—most likely above the Haarlem."

The person addressed—a man with an anxious, care-worn face that made him look fifty at least—lowered his glass, but did not reply for some moments. "You may be right, sir," he remarked, "though to me it has the air of an intended attack. What think you, Reed?"

"I agree with Mifflin. The attack will be higher up. Hah! Look there!"

A rift had come in the smoke, and a column of boats, moving with well-timed oars, could for a moment be seen as it came forward.

"They intend a landing at Kip's Bay, as I surmised," exclaimed the general. "Gentlemen, we shall be needed below." He turned to Reed and gave him an order concerning reinforcements, then wheeled, and, followed by the rest, trotted over the plowed field. Once on the highway, he spurred his horse, putting him to a sharp canter. . .

The road lay in the hollow of the land, and not till the party reached a slight rise were they able once more to get a glimpse of the shores of the bay. Then it was to find the flotilla well in toward its intended landing-place, and the American troops retreating in great disorder from their breastworks.

Exclamations of surprise and dismay sprang from the lips of the riders, and their leader, turning his horse, jumped the fence and galloped across the field to intercept the fugitives. Five minutes brought them up to the runaways, who, out of breath with the sharpness of their race, had come to a halt, and were being formed by their officers into a little less disorder.

"General Fellows, what is the reason for this shameful



retreat?" demanded the general, when within speaking distance.

"The men were seized with a panic on the approach of the boats, your Excellency, and could not be held in the lines."

Washington faced the regiments, his face blazing with scorn. "You ran before a shot had been fired! Before you had lost a man you deserted the works that have taken many weeks to build, and which could be held against any such force." He paused for a moment, and then, drawing his sword, called with spirit: "Who's for recovering them?"

A faint cheer passed down the lines; but almost as it sounded, the red coats of fifty or sixty light infantry came into view on the road, a skirmishing party thrown forward from the landing to reconnoiter. Had they been Howe's whole army, however, they could not have proved more effective, for instantly the two brigades broke and dissolved once more into squads of flying men.

At such cowardice, Washington lost all control of himself, and, dashing in among the fugitives, he passionately struck right and left with the flat of his sword, thundering curses at them; while Putnam and Mifflin, as well as the aides, followed his example. It was hopeless, however, to stay the rush; the men took the blows and curses unheeding while throwing away their guns and scattering in every direction.

Made frantic by such conduct, Washington wheeled his horse. "Charge!" he cried, and rode toward the enemy, waving his sword.

If the commander-in-chief hoped to put some of his own courage into the troops by his example he failed. Not a man of the runaways ceased fleeing. None the less, as if regardless of consequences in his desperation, Washington rode on, until one of the aides dashed his spurs into his horse and came up beside his general at a mad gallop.

"Your Excellency!" he cried, "'tis but hopeless, and

will end but in—" Then, as his superior did not heed him, he seized the left rein of his horse's bridle, and, pulling on it, swung him about in a large circle, letting go his hold only when they were riding away from the enemy.

Washington offered no resistance, and rode the hundred yards to where the rest of his staff were standing, with bowed head. Nothing was said as he rejoined the group, and Blueskin, disappointed in the charge for which he had shown as much eagerness as his rider, let his mind recur to thoughts of oats; finding no control in the hand that held his bridle, he set out at an easy trot toward headquarters.

"Get you some supper, gentlemen," he ordered, to such of his aides as were still of his party, "for 'tis likely that you will have more riding when the council have deliberated."

"'Tis advice he might take himself to proper advantage," said one of the juniors, while they were stripping off their wet coverings in a side room.

"Aye," asserted Brereton. "The general uses us hard, Tilghman, but he uses himself harder."

The make-shift meal was still unfinished, when the general's body-servant appeared with tea. Taking it, Brereton marched boldly to the council door, and, giving a knock, went in without awaiting a reply.

The group of anxious-faced men about the table looked up, and Washington, with a frown, demanded, "For what do you interrupt us, sir?"

The young officer put the tea down on the map lying in front of the general. "Billy didn't dare take this to your Excellency, so I made bold e'en to bring it myself."

"This is no time for tea, Colonel Brereton."

"'Tis no time for the army to lose their general," replied the aide. "I pray you drink it, sir, for our sake, if you won't for your own."

A kindly look supplanted the sternness of the previous

moment on the general's face. "I thank you for your thoughtfulness, Brereton," he said, raising the cup and pouring some of the steaming drink into the saucer.

*Fanice Meredith, Paul Leicester Ford, p. 154.*

### **"I Can Only Regret That I Have but One Life"**

Washington, as we know, at this time had been in great perplexity as to what the next movements of the British would be, and after consulting with his officers it was decided that some trusty man must be sent as a spy to Long Island to learn of the movements and plans of the British army.

Colonel Knowlton, whose regiment was known as "Congress's Own," and was composed of very sterling men, was directed to select some suitable man for the task, and his choice fell upon young Captain Nathan Hale of Connecticut, who, provided with passes and letters by Washington that would be helpful among all the armed vessels of the Americans, soon afterward crossed to Long Island, where he made many notes and sketches, and then prepared to recross the Sound to his friends. But as the old story runs, he was recognized by a relative who was a very bitter Tory, and at once was turned over to General Howe. Without even the form of a trial he was sent to Cunningham, the provost marshal, a man whose deeds make him one of the most justly detested men in our history, with orders for his execution.

Even at this time Cunningham showed his true nature, for he . . . refused young Hale permission to read his Bible or have a word with a clergyman before his death. Even the tender letters he had, by permission of Howe, written his mother were destroyed, and Nathan Hale was speedily hanged from an apple tree in an orchard that grew near the present East Broadway. The last words of the brave young martyr were, "I can only regret that I have but one life to give for my country."

The tragic death of Nathan Hale created a feeling of intense anger among the Continentals. The brutality and cold-blooded cruelty that attended it increased the fear of the wavering, and strengthened the determination of those who already were committed to the cause of the new nation.

*A Short History of the American Revolution*, Everett Tomlinson, p. 120.

### A Short, Sharp Action at White Plains

Meanwhile the days slipped along, and Washington waited on the Harlem Plains, planning descents on Long Island, and determining to make a desperate stand where he was, unless the situation decidedly changed. Then the situation did change, as neither he nor any one else apparently had anticipated. The British war-ships came up the Hudson past the forts, brushing aside our boasted obstructions, destroying our little fleet, and getting command of the river. Then General Howe landed at Frog's Point, where he was checked for the moment by the good disposition of Heath, under Washington's direction. These two events made it evident that the situation of the American army was full of peril, and that retreat was again necessary. Such certainly was the conclusion of the council of war, on [Oct.] 16th, acting this time in agreement with their chief. Six days Howe lingered on Frog's Point, bringing up stores or artillery or something; it matters little now why he tarried. Suffice it that he waited, and gave six days to his opponent. They were of little value to Howe, but they were of inestimable worth to Washington, who employed them in getting everything in readiness, in holding his council of war, and then on the 17th in moving deliberately off to very strong ground at White Plains. On his way he fought two or three slight, sharp and successful skirmishes with the British. Sir William followed closely, but with much caution, having now a dull glimmer in his mind that at the head of the raw troops in front of him was a man with whom it was not safe to be entirely careless.

On the 28th, Howe came up to Washington's position, and found the Americans quite equal in numbers, strongly intrenched, and waiting his attack with confidence. He hesitated, doubted, and finally feeling that he must do something, sent four thousand men to storm Chatterton Hill, an outlying post, where some fourteen hundred Americans were stationed. There was a short, sharp action, and then the Americans retreated in good order to the main army, having lost less than half as many men as their opponents. With caution now much enlarged, Howe sent for reinforcements, and waited two days. The third day it rained, and on the fourth Howe found that Washington had withdrawn to a higher and quite impregnable line of hills, where he held all the passes in the rear and awaited a second attack. Howe contemplated the situation for two or three days longer, and then broke camp and withdrew to Dobbs Ferry. Such were the great results of the victory of Long Island, two wasted months, and the American army still untouched.

*George Washington*, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. I, p. 168.

### **"If We Do Meet Again—Why, We Shall Smile"**

Lee was evidently elevated by his successes at the South, and disposed to criticise disparagingly the military operations of other commanders. In a letter, written on the day of his arrival, to his old associate in arms, General Gates, he condemns the position of the army, and censures Washington for submitting to the dictation of Congress, whose meddlesome instructions had produced it. "*Inter nos*," writes he, "the Congress seems to stumble at every step. I do not mean one or two of the cattle but the whole stable. I have been very free in delivering my opinion to them. In my opinion General Washington is much to blame in not menacing 'em with resignation, unless they refrain from unhinging the army by their absurd interference. Adieu, my dear friend; if we do meet again—why, we shall smile."

In the meantime, Congress, on the 11th of October, having heard of the ingress of the *Phoenix*, *Roebuck* and *Tartar*, passed a resolution that General Washington be desired, if it be practicable, by every art, and at whatever expense, to obstruct effectually the navigation of the North River between Fort Washington and Mount Constitution as well to prevent the egress of the enemy's vessels lately gone up as to hinder them from receiving succors.

Under so many conflicting circumstances, Washington held a council of war on the 16th, at Lee's headquarters. . . . Letters from the convention and from individual members of it were read, concerning the turbulence of the disaffected in the upper parts of the States; intelligence gained from deserters was likewise stated, showing the intention of the enemy to surround the camp. . . .

After much consideration and debate, all agreed, with but one dissenting voice, that it was not possible to prevent the communication from being cut off, and that one of the consequences mentioned in the question must follow. . . .

As the resolve of Congress seemed imperative with regard to Fort Washington, that post, it was agreed, should be "retained as long as possible."

A strong garrison was accordingly placed in it, . . . and solemnly charged by Washington to defend it to the last extremity. The name of the opposite post on the Jersey shore, where Greene was stationed, was changed from Fort Constitution to Fort Lee, in honor of the General. Lee, in fact, was the military idol of the day. Even the family of the commander-in-chief joined in paying him homage. Colonel Tench Tilghman, Washington's aide-de-camp, in a letter to a friend, writes: "You ask if General Lee is in health, and our people bold. I answer both in the affirmative. His appearance among us has contributed not a little to the latter."

**"Perhaps to Lose My Character"**

Howe, like most other genial gentlemen, was extremely lazy, so instead of hurrying into New Jersey, cutting off Washington and capturing Philadelphia, all of which he might have done with half of his force, he lingered to capture Fort Washington, which was neither useful, dangerous nor ornamental. Washington got as far south on the Palisades in time to observe the capture of the fort bearing his name, and to see the fort's defenders, who had not learned how to surrender according to German rule, bayoneted in great numbers by the Hessians while asking for quarter. Instead of swearing at Congress or condemning Greene's soul to the final abode of the wicked,—for both Congress and Greene had opposed Washington's desire to abandon the fort—the self-contained commander-in-chief burst into tears, thus proving anew his rare ability for doing the right thing at the right time.

The loss of the fort deprived Washington of three thousand troops, and the time of nearly all the remainder of the army would expire within a fortnight; two thousand men on each side of the Hudson was Washington's own estimate of the regular troops that would remain. No wonder, then, that he wrote his brother, regarding the delay of Congress in "engaging men upon such terms as would insure success," that he was "wearied almost to death with the retrograde motion of things, and I solemnly protest that a pecuniary reward of twenty thousand pounds a year would not induce me to undergo what I do, and after all, perhaps to lose my character, as it is impossible, under such a variety of distressing circumstances, to conduct matters agreeably to the public expectations."

*George Washington, John Habberton, p. 124.*

**Six Weeks after the Battle of Long Island**

Such was the status of the war six weeks after the battle of Long Island; Washington was merely on the de-

fensive in a position not hard to turn or even surround; that the British must sooner or later compel him to abandon his position would have been evident to any soldier of ordinary experience in strategy, but Washington was not that sort of a man, as yet, and even Greene, his ablest lieutenant, did not realize the army's danger. Lee *en route* from the south, although no patriot, was a better soldier; he comprehended the situation, freed his mind to Congress by letter, and then joined Washington. Meanwhile the enemy, on the Sound, worked further and further to the rear, landing troops finally near New Rochelle and moving toward White Plains, to which town Washington threw back his left. But the enemy's movements were not made without opposition; little by little the rebels were learning how to fight, and before Howe was fairly in line in Westchester county on the Sound, he had been severely tormented by Hand's Pennsylvanians, who had done valiant things on Long Island, Prescott, whom Howe had learned to respect at Bunker Hill, and Colonel Glover's Marblehead men, who had been at sea too much to fear anything on land. . . .

Washington finally massed most of the army at White Plains, where he fortified high ground with the Bronx river and a morass in front. It was in this vicinity that the Americans first saw and feared the British dragoon and that Washington inaugurated the beginning of the end of this special apprehension by offering a special reward of a hundred dollars to every man who brought in a trooper with his horse and accoutrements. A hundred dollars can create a great deal of courage.

At White Plains Washington scared Howe with a fortification erected in a manner not recognized by foreign authorities on defensive works. It consisted of corn stalks, pulled up by the roots and piled so that the rooted ends, with masses of earth clinging to them, resembled embankments of earth. Corn had occasionally saved the country



in time of peace, but never before had it risen to the dignity of constituting a fortification.

By this time, the end of October, the weather seemed very cold to Washington's army, which owned as few overcoats as an equal number of tramps would have done. Worse yet, their clothes were threadbare, and Washington had no new ones to issue; even shoddy blankets had not yet been invented, much less issued. Men who shiver all night are not the ones to fight well by daylight. For this reason and many others, one of which was that the enemy was certain to fortify his base before moving to an attack, Washington waited until Howe had intrenched himself; then he fell back to Northcastle, five miles, and again threw up lines. This apparently disgusted the enemy, for at the rate of distance already covered, Washington might hold him in pursuit for several years. Howe suddenly gave up the game and fell back toward New York, and Washington, leaving a force under Lee at Northcastle, from which point he could easily fall back so as to have the Croton River on his front, and placed Heath at Peekskill in command of a division for the defense of the Highlands, crossed the Hudson with his remaining troops and went into New Jersey to discover what Howe was up to.

*George Washington, John Habberton, p. 120.*

### **The British Take Fort Washington**

Howe was resolved, however, that his campaign should not be utterly fruitless, and therefore directed his attention to the defences of the Hudson, Fort Lee, and Fort Washington, and here he met with better success. Congress, in its military wisdom, had insisted that these forts must and could be held. So thought the generals, and so most especially and most unluckily, did Greene. Washington, with his usual accurate and keen perception, saw, from the time the men-of-war came up the Hudson, and, now that the British army was free, more clearly than ever

that both forts ought to be abandoned. Sure of his ground, he overruled Congress, but was so far influenced by Greene that he gave to that officer discretionary orders as to withdrawal. This was an act of weakness, as he afterwards admitted, for which he bitterly reproached himself, never confusing or glossing over his own errors, but loyal there as elsewhere to facts. An attempt was made to hold both forts and both were lost as he had foreseen. From Fort Lee the garrison withdrew in safety. Fort Washington was carried by storm after a severe struggle. Twenty-six hundred men and all the munitions of war fell into the hands of the enemy. It was a serious and most depressing loss, and was felt throughout the continent.

Meantime Washington had crossed into the Jerseys, and, after the loss of Fort Lee, began to retreat before the British, who, flushed with victory, now advanced rapidly under Lord Cornwallis. The crisis of his fate and of the Revolution was upon him. His army was melting away. The militia had almost all disappeared, and regiments whose term of enlistment had expired were departing daily. Lee, who had a division under his command, was ordered to come up, but paid no attention, although the orders were repeated almost every day for a month.

*George Washington*, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. 1, p. 169.

### **“Who Would Have Blamed Him?”**

At Hackensack, Washington had only about three thousand men, and the country being flat, was defenseless against any force that could cross the river. So he placed another river behind him by moving to Newark. Adjutant Reed was sent to Governor Livingston, of New Jersey, to beg for militia—for any sort of men were better than none, and General Mifflin was hurried to Philadelphia to ask aid of that city and Congress. Lee, still at Northcastle, was ordered to cross the Hudson, march south and join Wash-



Gen. William Howe



Sir Henry Clinton



Lord Cornwallis

PORTRAITS OF THREE BRITISH COMMANDERS



ington, and on him great dependence was placed, for he really had troops fairly equipped for service.

But Lee who never respected any military officer except the one he saw in his mirror, had begun to imagine himself an independent commander, and not only failed to obey orders but coolly outlined a campaign of his own, and endeavored to weaken Heath, who was holding the Highlands. Lee had but a single principle in life; this was, to consider the interests of Charles Lee, first, last, and all the time; but many a better man in his position might have lost his head temporarily under the undeserved praise and unmerited flattery that were heaped upon him. Even Reed, Washington's best friend, was so dazzled by Lee's brilliancy that he forgot his own honor so far as to criticise Washington and praise Lee in letters to the latter; worse still, a portion of this correspondence came under the eye of Washington, just when he needed all the friends he had, and gave him the cruelest wound he ever received. If he had never, after this, attached himself affectionately to any one, who would have blamed him?

*George Washington, John Habberton, p. 126.*

### A Letter to the Mother of Mary Philipse

In the midst of these public movements, old associations assert themselves. Here is a letter to the mother of the Mary Philipse, whom he did not marry twenty years before:

"To Mrs. Philipse, Philipsboro.

"Headquarters at Mr. Valentine's, Oct. 22, 1776.

"MADAM:

"The misfortunes of war and the unhappy circumstances frequently attendant thereon to individuals are more to be lamented than avoided; but it is the duty of every one to alleviate these as much as possible. Far be it from me, then, to add to the distress of a lady, who, I am but too sensible, must already have suffered much uneasi-

ness, if not inconvenience, on account of Col. Philipse's absence.

"No special order has gone forth from me for removal of the stock of the inhabitants, but from the nature of the case, and in consequence of some resolutions of the convention of this State, the measure has been adopted. However, as I am satisfied it is not meant to deprive families of their necessary support, I shall not withhold my consent to your retaining such parts of your stock as may be essential to this purpose, relying on your assurances and promise that no more will be retained."

"G. W."

In the correspondence of the autumn, both military and private, are one and another intimation of the condition of the currency. In a long letter of Aug. 15th to his agent, Lund Washington, he says:

"A barrel of corn which used to sell for ten shillings will now fetch forty shillings. A barrel of pork which could be had for three pounds sells for five pounds." . . .

Satisfied that Howe intended to operate in New Jersey, he withdrew the principal part of his force there, and was obliged, from point to point, to retire before him. Early in December he crossed the Delaware River, and virtually left the Jerseys in the hands of the English.

*The Life of George Washington, Studied Anew, Edward Everett Hale, p. 195.*

### **Sharing His Blanket with a Negro Servant**

Once the General was engaged in earnest consultation with Colonel Pickering until after night had fairly set in. Washington prepared to stay with the Colonel over night, provided he had a spare blanket and straw. "Oh, yes," said Primus, who was appealed to, "plenty of straw and blankets, plenty." . . .

In the middle of the night Washington awoke. He looked about him and descried the negro. He gazed at him a while and then spoke.

"Primus," said he, "Primus!" Primus started up and rubbed his eyes.

"What, General?" said he.

Washington rose up in his bed. "Primus," said he, "what do you mean by saying you had blankets and straw enough? Here you have given up your blankets and straw to me, that I may sleep comfortably, while you are obliged to sit through the night." "It's nothing, General," said Primus! "It's nothing! I'm well enough! Don't trouble yourself about me, General, but go to sleep again. No matter about me, I sleep very good!" "But it is matter, it is matter," said Washington. "I cannot do it, Primus. If either is to sit up, I will. But I think there is no need of either sitting up. The blanket is wide enough for two. Come and lie down with me."

"Oh, no, General!" said Primus, starting and protesting against the proposition. "No, let me sit here." "I say come and lie down here!" said Washington. "There is room for both; I insist upon it."

He threw open the blanket as he spoke, and moved to one side of the straw. Primus professed to have been exceedingly shocked at the idea of lying under the same covering with the commander-in-chief, but his tone was so resolute and determined that he could not hesitate. He prepared himself therefore and laid himself down by Washington; on the same straw under the same blanket, and the General and the negro slept until morning.

*Washington's Birthday* Edited by Robert Haven Schauffler p. 222.

## CHAPTER XVI

### "HURT IN THE HOUSE OF HIS FRIENDS"

#### When the Friend of His Bosom Could So Misjudge Him

In this moment of hurry and agitation, Colonel Reed, also, Washington's *fidus Achates*, wrote to Lee, but in a tone and spirit that may surprise the reader, knowing the devotion he had hitherto manifested for the commander-in-chief. After expressing the common wish that Lee should be at the principal scene of action, he adds: "I do not mean to flatter or praise you, at the expense of any other; but I do think it is entirely owing to you, that this army, and the liberties of America, so far as they are dependent on it, are not entirely cut off. You have decision, a quality often wanting in minds otherwise valuable, and I ascribe to this our escape from York Island, King's Bridge, and the Plains; and I have no doubt, had you been here, the garrison of Mount Washington would now have composed a part of this army; and from all these circumstances, I confess, I do ardently wish to see you removed from a place where there will be so little call for your judgment and experience, to the place where they are likely to be so necessary. Nor am I singular in my opinion; every gentleman of the family, the officers and soldiers generally, have a confidence in you. The enemy constantly inquire where you are, and seem to be less confident when you are present."

Then alluding to the late affair at Fort Washington, he continues: "General Washington's own judgment, seconded by representations from us, would, I believe, have saved the men, but, unluckily General Greene's judgment was contrary. This kept the general's mind in a



state of suspense, till the stroke was struck. Oh, general! An indecisive mind is one of the greatest misfortunes that can befall an army; how often have I lamented it this campaign! All circumstances considered, we are in a very awful and alarming situation; one that requires the utmost wisdom, and firmness of mind. As soon as the season will admit, I think yourself and some others should go to Congress, and form the plan of the new army. . . . I must conclude, with my clear and explicit opinion, that your presence is of the last importance."

Well might Washington apprehend that his character and conduct, in the perplexities in which he was placed, would be liable to be misunderstood by the public, when the friend of his bosom could so misjudge him.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. II, p. 498.

### "Made a Prisoner by a Brat!"

One story may illustrate the character of the life in the region at this time. A widow living with her only boy, a lad of twelve years, found that the vegetables in her garden were being taken. The lad resolved to watch one night, and so took his place in a dark spot near the garden. His loaded gun was in his hands, and for a while he had no difficulty in remaining awake. After a time, when the novelty of his duty was gone, and he was beginning to feel sleepy, he suddenly discovered some man filling a huge bag with the fruits of the garden. Stepping softly, the boy approached, and presenting his loaded gun at the soldier's rear, ordered him to keep the heavy bag and march before him. Death would be the consequence of any attempt to turn aside or drop the bag. There was nothing to be done but obey; so the huge Highlander, for such the soldier proved to be, was marched to the American camp and given over by the proud young captor as a prisoner of war. Slight cause for wonder is it that the captive grenadier, when at last he ventured to turn his

head and perceived who his captor was, should have exclaimed in disgust:

"A British grenadier made a prisoner by a brat! Such a brat!"

Men who attempted to visit their homes or families in this region were watched, and in numberless cases hanged or shot before the very eyes of their children. One man who had ventured to return to his home was traced, and just as the Tories, who were even more bitter than the regulars, were about to break into the house, after the demand for his surrender had been refused, was concealed by his frantic wife in a heap of ashes, and breathing through a long goose quill, even his face being covered, in this manner escaped from his pursuers. Not all of the murdering and plundering was done by the men of one side, but the terror that possessed the region at the time is one of the best commentaries on the horrors of war in any place or period.

*A Short History of the American Revolution*, Everett Tomlinson, p. 128.

### **"Opened by Mistake," by George Washington**

At this moment of care and perplexity, a letter, forwarded by express, arrived at headquarters. It was from General Lee, dated from his camp at Northcastle, to Colonel Reed, and was in reply to a letter written by that officer from Hackensack on the 21st, which we have already laid before the reader. Supposing that it related to official business, Washington opened it, and read as follows:

"My dear Mr. Reed:—I received your most obliging, flattering letter; lament with you that fatal indecision of mind, which in war is a much greater disqualification than stupidity, or even want of personal courage. Accident may put a decisive blunderer in the right; but eternal defeat and miscarriage must attend the man of the best parts, if cursed with indecision. The General recommends in so pressing a manner as almost to amount to an order, to bring over the Continental troops under my

command, which recommendation, or order, throws me into the greatest dilemma from several considerations." After stating these considerations, he adds: "My reason for not having marched already is, that we have just received intelligence that Rogers' corps, the light horse, part of the Highlanders, and another brigade, lie in so exposed a situation as to give the fairest opportunity of being carried. I should have attempted it last night, but the rain was too violent, and when our pieces are wet, you know our troops are *hors du combat*. This night I hope will be better, . . . I only wait myself for this business of Rogers and company being over, I shall then fly to you; for, to confess a truth, I really think our chief will do better with me than without me."

A glance over this letter sufficed to show Washington that, at this dark moment, when he most needed support and sympathy, his character and military conduct were the subject of disparaging comments, between the friend in whom he had so implicitly confided, and a sarcastic and apparently self-constituted rival. Whatever may have been his feelings of wounded pride and outraged friendship, he restrained them, and enclosed the letter to Reed, with the following chilling note:

"Dear Sir:—The enclosed was put into my hands by an express from White Plains. Having no idea of its being a private letter, much less suspecting the tendency of the correspondence, I opened it, as I have done all other letters to you from the same place, and Peekskill, upon the business of your office, as I conceived, and found them to be. This, as it is the truth, must be my excuse for seeing the contents of a letter which neither inclination nor intention would have prompted me to," etc.

The very calmness and coldness of this note must have had a greater effect on Reed, than could have been produced by the most vehement reproaches. In subsequent

communications, he endeavored to explain away the offensive paragraphs in Lee's letter, declaring there was nothing in his own inconsistent with the respect and affection he had ever borne for Washington's person and character.

Fortunately for Reed, Washington never saw that letter. There were passages in it beyond the reach of softening explanation. As it was, the purport of it, as reflected in Lee's reply, had given him a sufficient shock. His magnanimous nature, however, was incapable of harboring long resentments; especially in matters relating solely to himself. His personal respect for Colonel Reed continued; he invariably manifested a high sense of his merits, and consulted him, as before, on military affairs; but his hitherto affectionate confidence in him, as a sympathizing friend, had received an incurable wound. His letters, before so frequent, and such perfect outpourings of heart and mind, became few and far between, and confined to matters of business.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. II, p. 509.

### **The "Marine Turtle" and Admiral Howe's Flagship**

It was during this time that two events occurred that have been almost ignored in our records of the struggle. One was the attempt of Ezra Lee to blow up the *Eagle*, Admiral Howe's flagship, which was anchored off the shore of Governor's Island. A young mechanic named Bushnell, of Connecticut, had invented what he called a "marine turtle," by which he was confident that a daring man could move under the water, approach the hull of a ship, and by fastening his contrivance to the bottom, and arranging the clock-work of the "turtle," have ample time to escape himself before the explosion followed, which it was confidently believed would blow the largest man-of-war into flinders.

The plan approved, the daring Ezra Lee was selected to make the attempt. One night at midnight he entered

the machine, left the dock at the foot of Whitehall, and started on his perilous venture. Washington and several of his officers who were in the secret waited all night long on the dock for the outcome of the attempt, no one of them being hopeful of success, and as the gray of dawn appeared not even daring to believe that young Ezra would ever be seen again.

Just at that time, however, suddenly a column of water was thrown into the air near the dim outline of the *Eagle*, and it was apparent that there was a great commotion both on board the flagship and on the near-by shore. No great damage had been done, that was evident, but what had become of Ezra Lee? For a long time the American officers waited, and just as they were about to go back to their men, satisfied that the attempt had failed and that the young man was drowned, he was discovered in the water near the dock. Friendly hands speedily drew him forth, and warm were the words of praise bestowed upon him by all. The attempt had indeed failed, for the bottom of the flagship had been covered with copper. It had been impossible to find a place to which the turtle could be fastened. Ezra Lee's spirit and daring had appealed to Washington so strongly, however, that he was chosen by the commander as one of his most trusty scouts, and had an active part afterward in the battles of Trenton, Brandywine, and Monmouth.

*A Short History of the American Revolution*, Everett Tomlinson, p. 119.

### Facing the Grim Realities Alone

On December 2nd Washington was at Princeton with three thousand ragged men, and the British close upon his heels. They had him now surely in their grip. There could be no mistake this time, and there was therefore no need of a forced march. But they had not yet learned that to Washington even hours meant much, and when, after duly resting, they reached the Delaware, they found the Ameri-

cans on the other side, and all the boats destroyed for a distance of seventy miles.

It was winter now, the short gray days had come, and with them piercing cold and storms of sleet and ice. It seemed as if the elements alone would finally disperse the feeble body of men still gathered about the commander-in-chief. Congress had sent him blank commissions and orders to recruit, which were well meant, but were not practically of much value. As Glendower could call spirits from the vasty deep, so they, with like success, sought to call soldiers from the earth in the midst of defeat, and in the teeth of a North American winter. Washington, baffling pursuit and flying from town to town, left nothing undone. North and south went letters and appeals for men, money, and supplies. Vain, very vain, it all was, for the most part, but still it was done in a tenacious spirit. Lee would not come, the Jersey militia would not turn out, thousands began to accept Howe's amnesty, and signs of wavering were apparent in some of the Middle States. Philadelphia was threatened, Newport was in the hands of the enemy, and for ninety miles Washington had retreated, evading ruin again and again only by the width of a river. Congress voted not to leave Philadelphia—a fact which their General declined to publish,—and then fled.

No one remained to face the grim realities of the time but Washington, and he met them unmoved. Not a moment passed that he did not seek in some way to effect something. Not an hour went by that he did not turn calmly from fresh and ever renewed disappointment to work and action.

*George Washington*, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. I, p. 171.

### **The Capture of General Charles Lee**

After breakfast Lee sat writing a reply to General Gates, in which, as usual, he indulged in sarcastic comments on the commander-in-chief. "The ingenious manœuvre

of Fort Washington," writes he, "has completely unhinged the goodly fabric we had been building. There never was so d—d a stroke; *entre nous*, a certain great man is most damnably deficient. He has thrown me into a situation where I have my choice of difficulties: if I stay in this province I risk myself and army; and if I do not stay, the province is lost forever. . . . As to what relates to yourself, if you think you can be in time to aid the general, I would have you by all means go; you will at least save your army," etc.

While Lee was writing, Wilkinson was looking out of a window down a lane, about a hundred yards in length, leading from the house to the main road. Suddenly a party of British dragoons turned a corner of the avenue at a full charge.

"Here, sir, are the British cavalry!" exclaimed Wilkinson.

"Where?" replied Lee, who had just signed his letter.

"Around the house!"—for they had opened file and surrounded it.

"Where is the guard? D—the guard, why don't they fire?" Then after a momentary pause—"Do, sir, see what has become of the guard."

The guards, alas, unwary as their general, and chilled by the air of a frosty morning, had stacked their arms, and repaired to the south side of a house on the opposite side of the road to sun themselves, and were now chased by the dragoons in different directions. In fact, a Tory, who had visited the general the evening before, to complain of the loss of a horse taken by the army, having found where Lee was to lodge and breakfast, had ridden eighteen miles in the night to Brunswick and given the information, and had piloted back Colonel Harcourt with his dragoons.

The women of the house would fain have concealed Lee in a bed, but he rejected the proposition with disdain. Wilkinson, according to his own account, posted himself in

a place where only one person could approach at a time, and there took his stand, a pistol in each hand, resolved to shoot the first and second assailant, and then appeal to his sword. While in this "unpleasant situation," as he terms it, he heard a voice declare, "If the general does not surrender in five minutes I will set fire to the house!" After a short pause the threat was repeated, with a solemn oath. Within two minutes he heard it proclaimed, "Here is the general, he has surrendered."

There was a shout of triumph, but a great hurry to make sure of the prize before the army should arrive to the rescue. A trumpet sounded a recall to the dragoons, who were chasing the scattered guards. The general, bare-headed, and in his slippers and blanket coat, was mounted on Wilkinson's horse, which stood at the door, and the troop clattered off with their prisoner to Brunswick. In three hours the booming of cannon in that direction told the exultation of the enemy. They boasted of having taken the American palladium; for they considered Lee the most scientific and experienced of the rebel generals.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. II, p. 531.

### **"By His Own Folly and Imprudence"**

"Before you receive this letter," writes Washington to his brother Augustine, "you will undoubtedly have heard of the captivity of General Lee. This is an additional misfortune; and the more vexatious, as it was by his own folly and imprudence, and without a view to effect any good that he was taken. As he went to lodge three miles out of his own camp, and within twenty miles of the enemy, a rascally Tory rode in the night to give notice of it to the enemy, who sent a party of light-horse that seized him, and carried him off with every mark of triumph and indignity."

This is the severest comment that the magnanimous spirit of Washington permitted him to make on the conduct



and fortunes of the man who would have supplanted him; and this is made in his private correspondence with his brother. No harsh strictures on them appear in his official letters to Congress or the Board of War; nothing but regret for his capture, as a loss to the service.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. II, p. 538.

### A View of the Situation

By the middle of December Howe felt satisfied that the American army would soon dissolve, and leaving strong detachments in various posts he withdrew to New York. His premises were sound, and his conclusions logical, but he made his usual mistake of overlooking and underestimating the American general. No sooner was it known that he was on his way to New York than Washington, at the head of his dissolving army, resolved to take the offensive and strike an outlying post. In a letter of December 14th, the day after Howe began to move, we catch the first glimpse of Trenton. It was a bold spirit that, in the dead of winter, with a broken army, no prospect of reinforcements, and in the midst of a terror-stricken people, could thus resolve with some four thousand men to attack an army thoroughly appointed, and numbering in all its divisions twenty-five thousand soldiers.

It is well to pause a moment and look at that situation, and at the overwhelming difficulties which hemmed it in, and then try to realize what manner of man he was who rose superior to it, and conquered it. Be it remembered, too, that he never deceived himself, and never for an instant disguised the truth. Two years later he wrote that at this supreme moment, in what were called "the dark days of America," he was never despondent; and this was true enough, for despair was not in his nature. But no delusions lent him courage. On the 18th he wrote to his brother "that if every nerve was not strained to recruit this new army the game was pretty nearly up"; and added,

"You can form no idea of the perplexity of my situation. No man, I believe, ever had a greater choice of difficulties, and less means to extricate himself from them. However, under a full persuasion of the justice of our cause, I cannot entertain an idea that it will finally sink, though it may remain for some time under a cloud." There is no complaint, no boasting, no despair in this letter. We can detect a bitterness in the references to Congress and to Lee, but the tone of the letter is as calm as a May morning, and it concludes with sending love and good wishes to the writer's sister and her family.

*George Washington*, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. I, p. 172.

### **The Most Hopeless Gang of Tramps**

Fortunately, Major Wilkinson, of the detachment sent from the north by Schuyler, under Gates, to re-enforce Washington, had stumbled on Lee that morning while searching for Washington to obtain orders for Gates. Wilkinson avoided capture, informed Sullivan, now senior officer of Lee's corps, and then rejoined Gates; both generals were soon afterward on their way to Washington's camp, which they reached on the 20th of December.

The advent of these troops increased the available force to more than five thousand men; but ten days later three-fourths of them would be out of service, so that Washington would have only about fifteen hundred men, utterly destitute, with whom to begin the campaign of 1777! And yet, writing to his brother and not for public effect he says, "Under a full persuasion of the justice of our cause, I cannot entertain an idea that it will finally sink, though it may remain for some time under a cloud." This would be fine writing, even if penned at a comfortable library table, but its author will not receive full credit for it unless the reader comprehends that Washington at this time was chief of the most hopeless gang of tramps that ever plodded through New Jersey. They were hungry

and badly clothed, and the natives not only failed to relieve their necessities but were glad to see them depart, while close behind them came pursuers far worse than the farmers' dogs or town constables that sometimes chase the modern tramp. The commander's appeals to Congress and the country for aid were not responded to, and his orders to his principal lieutenant were not obeyed. The perplexities, humiliation, and helplessness of his position would have justified Washington in falling back upon his dignity and Mount Vernon; but his letter to his brother, quoted above, shows that he was satisfied to fall back upon his principles.

*George Washington, John Habberton, p. 130.*

**"For Heaven's Sake Keep This to Yourself!"**

"CAMP ABOVE TRENTON FALLS,

"Monday, 23d December, 1776.

*"To Colonel Cadwalader:*

"Christmas day at night, one hour before day, is the time fixed for our attempt on Trenton. For Heaven's sake keep this to yourself, as the discovery of it may prove fatal to us."

[G. WASHINGTON.]

*Itinerary of George Washington from June 15, 1775, to December 23, 1783, William S. Baker, p. 63.*

**"What a Time Is This to Hand Me Letters!"**

We have here some circumstances furnished to us by the memoirs of Wilkinson. That officer had returned from Philadelphia, and brought a letter from Gates to Washington. There was some snow on the ground, and he had traced the march of the troops for the last few miles by the blood from the feet of those whose shoes were broken. Being directed to Washington's quarters, he found him, he says alone, with his whip in his hand, prepared to mount his horse. "When I presented the letter of General Gates

to him, before receiving it, he exclaimed with solemnity,—‘What a time is this to hand me letters!’ I answered that I had been charged with it by General Gates. ‘By General Gates! Where is he?’ ‘I left him this morning in Philadelphia.’ ‘What was he doing there?’ ‘I understood that he was on his way to Congress.’ He earnestly repeated, ‘On his way to Congress!’ then broke the seal, and I made my bow, and joined General St. Clair on the bank of the river.”

Did Washington surmise the incipient intrigues and cabals, that were already aiming to undermine him? Had Gates’s eagerness to push on to Congress, instead of remaining with the army in a moment of daring enterprise, suggested any doubts as to his object? Perhaps not. Washington’s nature was too noble to be suspicious; and yet he had received sufficient cause to be distrustful.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. II, p. 550.



*Engraved by J. N. Gimbrell from the Painting by T. Sully.*

WASHINGTON AFTER CROSSING THE DELAWARE



## CHAPTER XVII

### TRENTON AND THE TURN OF THE TIDE

#### "Advance and Charge!"

As the army, excepting the recruits recently obtained for a short term, would practically disband at the end of the month, Washington determined to do something to encourage the country and the recruiting service, so he planned the capture of three regiments of Hessians at Trenton. A concerted movement of his troops failed, as such movements usually do. The detachment which he himself accompanied marched, on Christmas afternoon, nine miles up the west bank of the Delaware, through the snow, to a ferry where they consumed most of the night in crossing, the wind being high and the river full of ice. An officer, sent by Gates from Philadelphia with a letter to Washington, tracked the little force by the blood dropped from the feet of badly shod men; so, taking one consideration with another, the army celebrated Christmas in a manner truly unique.

Delay at the ferry made an attack before daylight impossible, and a heavy storm of snow and sleet rendered the muskets so useless that Sullivan, in command of one of the two columns into which Washington had divided his own force, sent a messenger to ask what he should do. "Advance and charge!" said Washington, with considerable temper. A long march through sleet that beats in the face is never conducive to amiability; Washington and his men would have charged that morning even if armed only with broomsticks, and they would have conquered too.

### Colonel Rahl's Fatal Game

Meanwhile, Washington had not been mistaken in supposing that the Hessians, unsuspecting of peril, would be spending the hours in a carousal. Many of the British light-horse were off on foraging or pillaging expeditions, and the Germans were making night hideous with their songs and shouts and drinking bouts. Colonel Rahl himself, the commander of the Hessians, was spending the night in the home of Abraham Hunt, a man who had dealings with both sides, and was true to neither.

On this particular night, Hunt had invited Colonel Rahl and a few others to a "Christmas supper" at his house, and far into the night the unsuspecting officers continued their card-playing and drinking. Colonel Rahl was about to "deal," when his negro servant, against express orders, entered the room, and thrust a note into the Hessian's hand, explaining that the man who had brought it had first begged to be permitted to enter himself, but had been refused, and then he had written the note and declared that Colonel Rahl must have it immediately, as it was of highest importance. If the colonel had known that the note was a word brought by a Tory who had discovered the presence of the advancing American army, it is more than likely that the history of the Revolution would have been far different from what it was. However, Colonel Rahl did not stop his game, but thrust the note unread into his pocket, and so never knew of Washington's approach until it was too late to act. Many of the greatest events in history have turned upon a pivot no larger than the negligence of the Hessian colonel.

Meanwhile, the little American force was steadily approaching in two divisions; one led by Sullivan along the lower road, and the other led by Greene on the upper road. With their bayonets the Americans drove back the startled outposts, and in a brief time the cannon had been so planted that the streets could be swept.



Colonel Rahl, who at last had realized the peril, and rushed forth from Hunt's house to rally his men, together with sixteen others, had been shot; and almost a thousand of the hired Hessians were speedily prisoners in the hands of the victorious Americans.

*A Short History of the American Revolution*, Everett Tomlinson, p. 141.

### "A Smiling Expression on His Countenance"

Although Rahl, the Hessian commander, had learned of the proposed attack, the surprise was complete. Washington rode at the head of the column which approached from the north; in his advance guard was Lieutenant, afterward President, James Monroe, an eighteen-year-old Virginia boy, who grew a great deal that morning. Sullivan following the river, struck the town on its western side, and sent part of his men to the southern end. All the outposts were struck at once, and the helplessness of the foreign soldier when in the face of the unexpected, was immediately manifested, for some of the hungry, tired, ragged Americans suddenly saw about five hundred of the enemy, among them a troop of the terrible British cavalry, actually running away! Rahl, the Hessian commander, although at first inclined to run, rallied most of the troops in the town and showed fight, till he received a mortal wound. Then his troops suddenly imagined that they had business in Princeton; but finding Hind's riflemen, now veterans, in their way, they changed their minds and threw down their colors. When Washington's attention was called to this fact, he was so astonished that he started alone to see; as he was followed by his entire column, the Hessians grounded their arms also, and the amazed Washington discovered that his first independent engagement had yielded him a thousand prisoners! To one of those prisoners the world owes the information concerning Washington, that "His eyes have scarce any fire," which is not strange for eyes that had just gone sleepless for a night and

been blinded by sleet for hours afterward. "There is, however, a smiling expression on his countenance when he speaks, that wins affection and respect," says the honest Dutchman. The fact that Washington could smile, is one that the reader can not keep too prominently in mind, if he would regard the Father of his Country as a living man instead of a historic mummy.

*George Washington, John Habberton, p. 133.*

### Washington's Report of the Battle of Trenton

*"(Letter to the President of Congress.)*

*"Head-Quarters, Newtown,*

*"27 December, 1776.*

"SIR,

"I have the pleasure of congratulating you upon the success of an enterprise, which I had formed against a detachment of the enemy lying in Trenton, and which was executed yesterday morning. The evening of the 25th I ordered the troops intended for this service to parade back of McKonkey's Ferry, that they might begin to pass as soon as it grew dark, imagining we should be able to throw them all over, with the necessary artillery, by twelve o'clock, and that we might easily arrive at Trenton by five in the morning, the distance being about nine miles. But the quantity of ice, made that night, impeded the passage of the boats so much, that it was three o'clock before the artillery could all be got over; and near four, before the troops took up their line of march. This made me despair of surprising the town, as I well knew we could not reach it before the day was fairly broke. But as I was certain there was no making a retreat without being discovered and harassed on repassing the river, I determined to push on at all events. I formed my detachment into two divisions, one to march by the lower or river road, the other by the upper or Pennington road. As the divisions had nearly the same distance to march, I ordered each of them, imme-

diately upon forcing the outguards, to push directly into the town, that they might charge the enemy before they had time to form.

"The upper division arrived at the enemy's advanced posts exactly at eight o'clock; and in three minutes after, I found, from the fire on the lower road, that the other division had also got up. The outguards made but small opposition, though for their numbers, they behaved very well, keeping up a constant retreating fire from behind houses. We presently saw their main body formed; but, from their motions, they seemed undetermined how to act. Being hard pressed by our troops, who had already got possession of their artillery, they attempted to file off by a road on their right, leading to Princeton. But, perceiving their intention, I threw a body of troops in their way, which immediately checked them. Finding from our disposition that they were surrounded, and that they must inevitably be cut to pieces if they made any further resistance, they agreed to lay down their arms. The number that submitted in this manner was twenty-three officers and eight hundred and eighty-six men. Colonel Rahl, the commanding officer, and seven others were found wounded in the town. I do not exactly know how many were killed, but I fancy not above twenty or thirty, as they never made any regular stand. Our loss is very trifling indeed, only two officers and one or two privates wounded. . . .

"I am fully confident, that, could the troops under Generals Ewing and Cadwalader have passed the river, I should have been able with their assistance to drive the enemy from all their posts below Trenton. But the numbers I had with me being inferior to theirs below me, and a strong battalion of light infantry being at Princeton above me, I thought it most prudent to return the same evening with the prisoners and the artillery we had taken. We found no stores of any consequence in the town.

"In justice to the officers and men, I must add, that

their behavior on this occasion reflects the highest honor upon them. The difficulty of passing the river in a very severe night, and their march through a violent storm of snow and hail, did not in the least abate their ardor; but, when they came to the charge, each seemed to vie with the others in pressing forward; and were I to give a preference to any particular corps, I should do great injustice to the others. Colonel Baylor, my first aide-de-camp, will have the honor of delivering this to you; and from him you may be made acquainted with many other particulars. His spirited behavior upon every occasion requires me to recommend him to your particular notice. I have the honor to be," etc.

[G. WASHINGTON.]

*Writings of George Washington*, Edited by Lawrence B. Evans, Ph.D., p. 80.

Raising of "United Colonies" flag .....	January 1, 1776
Thomas Paine's "Common Sense" published,	
	January 5, 1776
Evacuation of Boston by the British.....	March 17, 1776
British repulsed at Fort Moultrie.....	June 28, 1776
Declaration of Independence signed.....	July 4, 1776
Battle of Long Island .....	August 27, 1776
Battle of White Plains.....	October 28, 1776
Fort Washington taken by the British,	November 16, 1776
Washington crossed the Delaware and took Trenton,	
	December 26, 1776

### "George Will Not Forget Himself"

[At Fredericksburg] the matron remained during nearly the whole of the trying period of the Revolution. Directly in the way of the news, as it passed from north to south, one courier would bring intelligence of success to our arms, another "swiftly coursing at his heels," the saddening tale of



*Engraved by J. McGeoffin from the Original Drawing by C. Schuessle.*

EARLY MORNING BATTLE AT TRENTON



disaster and defeat. While thus ebbcd and flowed the fortunes of our cause, the mother, trusting to the wisdom and protection of Divine Providence, preserved the even tenor of her life, affording an example to those matrons whose sons were alike engaged in the arduous contest; and showing that unavailing anxieties, however belonging to human nature, were unworthy of mothers whose sons were combating for the inestimable rights of mankind, and the freedom and happiness of unborn ages.

When the comforting and glorious intelligence arrived of the passage of the Delaware, an event which restored our hopes from the very brink of despair, a number of her friends waited upon the mother with congratulations. She received them with calmness; observed that it was most pleasurable news, and that George appeared to have deserved well of his country for such signal service; and continued, in reply to the gratulating patriots (most of whom held letters in their hands, from which they read extracts, for gazettes were not so plenty then as now), "but, my good sirs, here is too much flattery; still George will not forget the lessons I early taught him—he will not forget himself, though he is the subject of so much praise."

Here I will speak of the absurdity of an idea which, from some strange cause or other, has been suggested, though certainly never believed, that the mother of Washington was disposed to favor the royal cause. Not the slightest foundation has such a surmise in truth. Like many others, whose days of enthusiasm were in the wane, that lady doubted the prospects of success in the outset of the war, and long during its continuance feared that our means would be found inadequate to a successful contest with so formidable a power as Britain; and that our soldiers, brave, but undisciplined and ill provided, would be unequal to cope with the veteran and well-appointed troops of the king. Doubts like these were by no means confined to this Virginian matron, but were both entertained and

expressed by the stanchest of patriots and the most determined of men.

*Recollections of Washington*, by His Adopted Son, George Washington Parke Custis, p. 136.

### **"Intrusted with Almost Unlimited Power"**

At this critical moment, too, Washington received a letter from a committee of Congress, transmitting him resolves of this body, dated the 27th of December, investing him with military powers quite dictatorial. "Happy is it for this country," write the committee, "that the general of their forces can safely be intrusted with the most unlimited power, and neither personal security, liberty, nor property, be in the least degree endangered thereby."

Washington's acknowledgment of this great mark of confidence was noble and characteristic. "I find Congress have done me the honor to intrust me with powers, in my military capacity, of the highest nature and almost unlimited extent. Instead of thinking myself freed from all civil obligations by this mark of their confidence, I shall constantly bear in mind that, as the sword was the last resort for the preservation of our liberties, so it ought to be the first thing laid aside when those liberties are firmly established."

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. II, p. 574.

### **Robert Morris Raises Some "Hard Money"**

Inspired by his success at Trenton, the panic of the enemy, and their retirement from the Delaware, his army strengthened by new recruits and the junction of the militia who had guarded the power posts of the river, Washington determined to recross the Delaware and occupy Trenton, and then make such offensive movements against the British as prudence should dictate. This he accomplished on the 30th. The term of service of a large portion of the Eastern militia was now about expiring.



He prevailed on them to remain six weeks longer, by promising to each soldier a bounty of ten dollars. The military chest was not in condition to permit him to fulfil his promise, and he wrote to Robert Morris, the great patriot financier of the Revolution, for aid, pleading the urgent necessity of the case. It was necessary to have hard money and the sum was large. The requirement seemed almost impossible to meet. Government credit was low, but confidence in Robert Morris was unbounded. In a desponding state, unusual for him, Morris left his counting-room at a late hour, musing upon the probabilities of meeting the demand. On the way he met a wealthy Quaker, and made known his wants.

"Robert, what security canst thou give?" asked the Quaker.

"My note, and my honor," promptly replied Morris.

"Thou shalt have it," was the answer, and the next morning Robert Morris wrote to Washington:

"I was up early this morning to dispatch a supply of fifty thousand dollars to your excellency. It gives me great pleasure that you have engaged the troops to continue; and if further occasional supplies of money are necessary, you may depend on my exertions either in a public or private capacity."

*.The Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution, Benson J. Lossing, Vol. II, p. 25.*

### Horse Lovers and Heroes

"My father was Washington's confidential courier and I have often heard him tell of a call made by the commander-in-chief on Mr. Morris at a very critical time, and how nobly it was responded to.

"The army was encamped near Trenton, and was nearly out of supplies, and quite out of money.

"One morning my father was summoned to Washington's tent, and the General said to him: 'Gray, in how short a time could you ride down to Philadelphia? I

want you to take a letter to Mr. Robert Morris, and there is the utmost need for dispatch.'

"My father named the shortest time possible for making the journey with a fleet horse.

"Then just take the best horse in the army, and set off at once with this letter,' said Washington.

"Well, General,' said my father, 'the best horse I know of in the army is your chestnut sorrel.'

"He did not expect that Washington would allow him to take that horse, for it was his favorite, but he said at once: 'Take him.' And my father rode him to Philadelphia, and made good time with him.

"When Robert Morris read the letter, he asked: 'How soon can you start for Trenton with my reply to General Washington, Mr. Gray?'

"As soon, sir, as I can get a fresh horse,' said my father. 'It won't do to ride back General Washington's chestnut sorrel.'

"Of course not,' said Mr. Morris. 'Go to my stable, and take the best horse you can find. I am in haste to assure General Washington that I will do all I can to meet his wishes.'

What example, I ask, of Roman patriotism, can surpass that of these two modern heroes and horse lovers?

Mr. Gray continued:

"My father got safely back to headquarters with the reply of Mr. Morris. He said Washington's face lighted up when he read it; but he must have known pretty much what it would be, for he had everything ready for marching, and in five minutes the drums beat and the bugle sounded, and the whole army was in motion. You see, he had written to Morris to supply money and provisions, and Morris had consented, and set to work with all his energy. The morning after my father's hurried visit to Philadelphia, my mother returned from market, at about six o'clock, saying:

“‘It’s well I went so early! If I had been a half-hour later, I should not have been able to get a pound of beef or bacon. Robert Morris is sending his men all about to buy up provisions for the army.’”

*Stories and Sketches*, Grace Greenwood, p. 23.

### **“The Old Fox” and the Battle of Princeton**

Cornwallis, leaving part of his force at Princeton, New Jersey, hurried south to catch Washington. He found him between Trenton and a bend of the Delaware. That night the British general went to sleep, certain that Washington could not get away. For how could he hope to escape, with the British army in front and the broad deep Delaware River full of floating ice behind him? Cornwallis told his brother officers that they would “bag the old fox” in the morning. While the British general lay dreaming, Washington like an “old fox” crept stealthily around him, and got to Princeton. In the battle there (January 3, 1777), the American advance force was driven back. Just then Washington came up. He saw that, if beaten, our army would be lost. Calling his troops to follow him, he rode within thirty yards of the British force, and stood facing the foe, exposed to the fire of both sides. For some moments he was completely hidden from sight by the smoke of battle.

*The Leading Facts of American History*, D. H. Montgomery, p. 174.

### **“Thank God! Your Excellency Is Safe!”**

The heroism of Washington on the field of Princeton is a matter of history. We have often enjoyed a touching reminiscence of that ever-memorable event from the late Colonel Fitzgerald, who was aide to the chief, and who never related the story of his general’s danger and almost miraculous preservation, without adding to his tale the homage of a tear.

The aide-de-camp had been ordered to bring up the troops from the rear of the column, when the band under General Mercer became engaged. Upon returning to the spot where he had left the commander-in-chief, he was no longer there, and, upon looking around, the aide discovered him endeavoring to rally the line which had been thrown into disorder by a rapid onset of the foe. Washington, after several ineffectual efforts to restore the fortunes of the fight, is seen to rein up his horse, with his head to the enemy, and in that position to become immovable. It was a last appeal to his soldiers, and seemed to say, Will you give up your general to the foe? Such an appeal was not made in vain. The discomfited Americans rally on the instant, and form into line; the enemy halt, and dress their line; the American chief is between the adverse posts, as though he had been placed there, a target for both. The arms of both lines are levelled. Can escape from death be possible? Fitzgerald, horror-struck at the danger of his beloved commander, dropped the reins upon his horse's neck, and drew his hat over his face, that he might not see him die. A roar of musketry succeeded, and then a shout. It is the shout of victory. The aide-de-camp ventures to raise his eyes, and O, glorious sight! the enemy are broken and flying, while dimly amidst the glimpses of smoke is seen the chief, "alive, unharmed, and without a wound," waving his hat, and cheering his comrades to the pursuit.

Colonel Fitzgerald, celebrated as one of the finest horsemen of the American army, now dashed his rowels in his charger's flanks, and, heedless of the dead and dying in his way, flew to the side of his chief, exclaiming, "Thank God! your excellency is safe!" The favorite aide, a gallant and warm-hearted son of Erin, a man of thews and sinews, and "albeit unused to the melting mood," now gave loose rein to his feelings, and wept like a child, for joy.

Washington, ever calm amid scenes of greatest excitement, affectionately grasped the hand of his aide and friend,



*From the Original by Chappel.*

“THE DAY IS OUR OWN!”  
Battle of Princeton, January 3, 1777



and then ordered—"Away, my dear colonel, and bring up the troops—the day is our own!"

*Recollections of Washington*, by His Adopted Son, George Washington Parke Custis, p. 190.

### Washington's Report of the Battle of Princeton

*(Letter to the President of Congress.)*

"Pluckemin, 5 January, 1777.

"SIR,

"I have the honor to inform you, that, since the date of my last from Trenton, I have removed with the army under my command to this place. The difficulty of crossing the Delaware, on account of the ice made our passage over it tedious, and gave the enemy opportunity of drawing in their several cantonments, and assembling their whole force at Princeton. Their large pickets advanced towards Trenton, their great preparations, and some intelligence I had received, added to their knowledge, that the 1st of January brought on a dissolution of the best part of our army, gave me the strongest reasons to conclude, that an attack upon us was meditating.

"Our situation was most critical, and our force small. To remove immediately was again destroying every dawn of hope, which had begun to revive the breasts of the Jersey militia; and to bring . . . troops, . . . (amounting in the whole to about three thousand six hundred) to Trenton, was to bring them to an exposed place. One or the other, however, was unavoidable. The latter was preferred, and they were ordered to join us at Trenton, which they did, by a night-march, on the 1st instant. On the 2nd, according to my expectation, the enemy began to advance upon us; and, after some skirmishing, the head of their column reached Trenton about four o'clock, whilst their rear was as far back as Maidenhead. They attempted to pass Sanpink Creek, which runs through Trenton, at

different places; but, finding the fords guarded, they halted, and kindled their fires. We were drawn up on the other side of the creek. In this situation we remained until dark, cannonading the enemy, and receiving the fire of their field-pieces, which did us but little damage.

“Having by this time discovered, that the enemy were greatly superior in number, and that their design was to surround us, I ordered all our baggage to be removed silently to Burlington soon after dark; and at twelve o’clock after renewing our fires, and leaving guards at the bridge in Trenton, and other passes on the same stream above, marched by a roundabout road to Princeton, where I knew they could not have much force left, and might have stores. One thing I was certain of, that it would avoid the appearance of a retreat (which was of consequence, or to run the hazard of the whole army being cut off), whilst we might by a fortunate stroke withdraw General Howe from Trenton, and give some reputation to our arms. Happily we succeeded. We found Princeton about sunrise, with only three regiments and three troops of light-horse, two of which were on their march to Trenton. These three regiments, especially the two first, made a gallant resistance, and, in killed, wounded, and prisoners, must have lost five hundred men; upwards of one hundred of them were left dead on the field; and, with what I have with me and what were taken in the pursuit and carried across the Delaware, there are near three hundred prisoners, fourteen of whom are officers, all British.

“This piece of good fortune is counterbalanced by the loss of the brave and worthy General Mercer.

“From the best information I have received, General Howe has left no men either at Trenton or Princeton. The truth of this I am endeavoring to ascertain, that I may regulate my movements accordingly. The militia are fast taking spirit, and, I am told, are coming in fast from this State; but I fear those from Philadelphia will scarcely



submit to the hardships of a winter campaign much longer, especially as they very unluckily sent their blankets with their baggage to Burlington. I must do them the justice however to add, that they have undergone more fatigue and hardship, than I expected militia, especially citizens, would have done at this inclement season. I am just moving to Morristown, where I shall endeavor to put them under the best cover I can. Hitherto we have been without any; and many of our poor soldiers quite barefoot, and ill clad in other respects. I have the honor to be," etc.,

[G. WASHINGTON.]

*Writings of George Washington*, Edited by Lawrence B. Evans, Ph.D., p. 84.

### Troubles about Allegiance and Rank

In January Washington issued a proclamation requiring those inhabitants who had subscribed to Howe's declaration to come in within thirty days and take the oath of allegiance to the United States. If they failed to do so they were to be treated as enemies. The measure was an eminently proper one, and the proclamation was couched in the most moderate language. It was impossible to permit a large class of persons to exist on the theory that they were peaceful American citizens and also subjects of King George. The results of such conduct were in every way perilous and intolerable, and Washington was determined that he would divide the sheep from the goats, and know whom he was defending and whom attacking. Yet for this wise and necessary action he was called in question in Congress and accused of violating civil rights and the resolves of Congress. Nothing was actually done about it, but such an incident shows from a single point the infinite tact and resolution required in waging war under a government whose members were unable to comprehend what was meant, and who could not see that until they had beaten England it was hardly worth while to worry about civil rights, which in case of defeat would speedily cease to exist altogether.

Another fertile source of trouble arose from questions of rank. Members of Congress in making promotions and appointments, were more apt to consider local claims than military merit, and they also allowed their own personal prejudices to affect their action in this respect far too much. Thence arose endless heart-burnings and jealousies, followed by resignations and the loss of valuable officers. Congress, having made the appointments, would go cheerfully about its business, while the swarm of grievances thus let loose would come buzzing about the devoted head of the commander-in-chief. He could not get away, but was compelled to quiet rivalries, allay irritated feelings, and ride the storm as best he might. It was all done, however, in one way or another; by personal appeals, and by letters full of dignity, patriotism, and patience, which are very impressive and full of meaning for students of character, even in this day and generation.

*George Washington*, Henry Cabot Lodge Vol. 1, p. 183.

### Washington's Proclamation

"Whereas, several persons, inhabitants of the United States of America, influenced by inimical motives, intimidated by the threats of the enemy, or deluded by a proclamation issued the 30th of November last, by Lord and General Howe, styled the King's commissioners for granting pardons, etc. (now at open war and invading these States), have been so lost to the interest and welfare of their country, as to repair to the enemy, sign a declaration of fidelity, and in some cases have been compelled to take the oaths of allegiance, and engage not to take up arms, or encourage others to do so, against the king of Great Britain. And, whereas, it has become necessary to distinguish between the friends of America and those of Great Britain, inhabitants of these States, and that every man who receives protection from, and is a subject of any State (not being conscientiously scrupulous against bearing arms), should stand ready to

defend the same against hostile invasion: I do, therefore, in behalf of the United States, by virtue of powers committed to me by Congress, hereby strictly command and require every person, having subscribed such declaration, taken such oaths, and accepted such protection and certificate, to repair to headquarters, or to the quarters of the nearest general offices of the Continental army or militia (until further provision can be made by civil authority), and there deliver up such protection, certificate, and passports, and take the oath of allegiance to the United States of America; nevertheless, hereby granting full liberty to all such as prefer the interest and protection of Great Britain to the freedom and happiness of their country, forthwith to withdraw themselves and families within the enemies' lines. And I do hereby declare, that all and every person who may refuse to comply with this order, within thirty days from the date hereof, will be deemed adherents to the king of Great Britain and treated as common enemies of these American States."

Broadside distributed in New Jersey, 1776-7.

### **A Sarcastic Reply to the Howes' Proclamation of Pardon**

"Messrs. Howe: We have seen your proclamation and as it is a great curiosity think it deserves some notice, and lest no one else should deign to notice it, will make a few remarks upon what was designed for public benefit. In this rarity we see slaves offering liberty to free Americans; thieves and robbers offer to secure our rights and property; murderers offer us pardon; a perjured tyrant by the mouths of two of his hireling butchers, 'commands' all the civil and military powers, in these independent States to resign all pretensions to authority, and to acknowledge subjection to a foreign despot, even his mock majesty, now reeking with blood and murder. This is truly a curiosity, and is a compound of the most consummate arrogance and the folly of the cloven-footed spawn of despairing wretches, who are laboring to complete the works of tyranny and death. It

would be far less wicked and not quite so stupid for the Grand Turk to send two of his slaves into Britain to command all Britains to acknowledge themselves slaves of the Turks, offering to secure their rights and property, and to pardon such as had borne arms against his Sublime Highness, upon condition of their making peace within 'sixty days.'

"Messieurs Howe and W. Howe, pray read your proclamation once more, and consider how modest you appear; and reflect on the infinite contempt with which you are viewed by the Americans, and remember the meanest freeman scorns the highest slave."

Broadside scattered in New Jersey in the winter of 1776-7

### **Washington Had Taken Howe's Measure**

Howe, with his army of 28,000, now quietly allowed Washington to reconquer New Jersey with 5000. After the battle of Princeton, Cornwallis abandoned Trenton, Bordentown, and Princeton, removed all the British troops from them, and quietly returned to New Brunswick. Washington found that there would be too much risk in attacking New Brunswick immediately after Princeton, so he passed on northward into the heart of New Jersey, and took up a strong position at Morristown Heights, west of New York, and half-way between New York and the Delaware. Putnam came from Philadelphia with a few troops and occupied Princeton, and Heath had a few more on the Hudson. In other words, Washington, with scarcely 10,000 men, made a line of cantonments through New Jersey and held it without opposition from Howe's 28,000 all that winter and the following spring until June, 1777.

He was constantly picking off stragglers from the British posts at New Brunswick and Amboy, and, as Gallaway remarked, killed more regulars in that way than Howe would have lost by surrounding and defeating or starving him out at Morristown. In March Washington's force had sunk

to less than 3000 effectives, and yet he remained undisturbed by the vast force in New York.

Washington had taken Howe's measure. For the rest of the British general's year and a half in America, the patriot general, no matter how low his force dwindled, always remained encamped within a few miles of the vast hosts of his Whig antagonist undisturbed and unpursued. There was no need of retreating among the Indians and buffalo of the West.

*The True History of the American Revolution*, Sydney George Fisher, p. 328.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### BRANDYWINE AND GERMANTOWN

#### Waiting at Morristown

After the "two lucky strokes at Trenton and Princeton," as he himself called them, Washington took up a strong position at Morristown and waited. His plan was to hold the enemy in check, and to delay all operations until spring. It is easy enough now to state his purpose, and it looks very simple, but it was a grim task to carry it out through the bleak winter days of 1777. The Jersey farmers, spurred by the sufferings inflicted upon them by the British troops, had turned out at last in deference to Washington's appeals, after the victories of Trenton and Princeton, had harassed and cut off outlying parties, and had thus straitened the movements of the enemy. But the main army of the colonies, on which all depended, was in a pitiable state. It shifted its character almost from day to day. The curse of short enlistments, so denounced by Washington, made itself felt now with frightful effect. With the new year most of the continental troops departed, while others to replace them came in very slowly, and recruiting dragged most wearisomely. Washington was thus obliged, with temporary reinforcements of raw militia, to keep up appearances; and no commander ever struggled with a more trying task. At times it looked as if the whole army would actually disappear, and more than once Washington expected that the week's or the month's end would find him with not more than five hundred men. At the beginning of March he had about four thousand men, a few weeks later only three thousand raw troops, ill-fed, ill-clad, ill-shod, ill-armed, and almost unpaid. Over against him was Howe, with eleven

thousand men in the field, and still more in the city of New York, well disciplined and equipped, well-armed, well-fed, and furnished with every needful supply. The contrast is absolutely grotesque, and yet the force of one man's genius and will was such that this excellent British army was hemmed in and kept in harmless quiet by their ragged opponents.

Washington's plan, from the first, was to keep the field at all hazards, and literally at all hazards did he do so. Right and left his letters went, day after day, calling with pathetic but dignified earnestness for men and supplies. In one of these epistles, to Governor Cooke of Rhode Island, written in January, to remonstrate against raising troops for the State only, he set forth his intentions in a few words. "You must be sensible," he said, "that the season is fast approaching when a new campaign will open; nay, the former is not yet closed; nor do I intend it shall be, unless the enemy quits the Jerseys."

*George Washington*, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. 1, p. 180.

### Remained Standing throughout the Whole Service

An anecdote is told of Washington's conduct while commander-in-chief, illustrative of his benignant attention to others, and his freedom from all assumption. While the army was encamped at Morristown, he one day attended a religious meeting where divine service was to be celebrated in the open air. A chair had been set out for his use. Just before the service commenced a woman with a child in her arms approached. All the seats were occupied. Washington immediately rose, placed her in the chair which had been assigned to him, and remained standing throughout the whole service.

*Entertaining Anecdotes of Washington* (Boston, 1833), p. 39.

### "Try Me!"

Among the foreign candidates for appointments was one Colonel Conway, a native of Ireland, but who, according

to his own account, had been thirty years in the service of France, and claimed to be a chevalier of the Order of St. Louis, of which he wore the decoration. Mr. Deane had recommended him to Washington as an officer of merit, and had written to Congress that he considered him well qualified for the office of adjutant or brigadier-general, and that he had given him reason to hope for one or the other of these appointments. Colonel Conway pushed for that of brigadier-general. It had been conferred some time before by Congress on two French officers, De Fermois and Deborre, who, he had observed, had been inferior to him in the French service, and it would be mortifying now to hold rank below them.

"I cannot pretend," writes Washington to the president, "to speak of Colonel Conway's merits or abilities of my own knowledge. He appears to be a man of candor, and if he has been in service as long as he says, I should suppose him infinitely better qualified to serve us than many who have been promoted, as he speaks our language."

Conway accordingly received the rank of brigadier-general, of which he subsequently proved himself unworthy. He was boastful and presumptuous, and became noted for his intrigues, and for a despicable cabal against the commander-in-chief, which went by his name, and of which we shall have to speak hereafter.

A candidate of a different stamp had presented himself in the preceding year, the gallant, generous-spirited Thaddeus Kosciuszko. He was a Pole, of an ancient and noble family of Lithuania, and had been educated for the profession of arms at the military school at Warsaw, and subsequently in France. Disappointed in a love affair with a beautiful lady of rank with whom he had attempted to elope, he had emigrated to this country, and came provided with a letter of introduction from Dr. Franklin to Washington.

"What do you seek here?" inquired the commander-in-chief.



"To fight for American independence."

"What can you do?"

"Try me."

Washington was pleased with the curt yet comprehensive reply, and with his chivalrous air and spirit, and at once received him into his family as an aide-de-camp. Congress shortly afterward appointed him an engineer, with the rank of colonel. He proved a valuable officer throughout the Revolution, and won an honorable and lasting name in our country.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. III, p. 71.

### The General's Narrow Escape

In Delaware the General had a narrow escape. He rode out with Marquis Lafayette on a reconnaissance, attended by but two officers and an orderly. General Sullivan had an officer follow with a half-troop; but the General, fearing such numbers might attract attention, ordered them to wait behind a thicket. Looking thence, they saw the General ride direct toward a picket of the enemy, which from their vantage they could see, but he could not. An English officer, perceiving him, seemed to give an order to fire: but as the men raised their pieces he struck them up. As he was about to give the order to fire, the General, being satisfied, had turned his back to ride away. It is a curious tale, is it not? and none can explain it.

Long years after I myself met an English officer, a General Henderson, in Canada, and on my telling him the incident, he said at once it was he who was concerned, and that when the General turned to ride away he could not make up his mind to shoot down a man who had turned his back. He was amazed and pleased to know who it was he thus spared.

*Hugh Wynne: Free Quaker*, S. Weir Mitchell, M.D., LL.D., p. 254.

### "To Learn, and Not to Instruct"

Lafayette, in his memoirs, describes a review of Washington's army which he witnessed about this time. "Eleven thousand men, but tolerably armed, and still worse clad, presented," he said, "a singular spectacle; in their parti-colored and often naked state, the best dresses were hunting shirts of brown linen. Their tactics were equally irregular. They were arranged without regard to size, excepting that the smallest men were the front rank; with all this, they were good looking soldiers conducted by zealous officers."

"We ought to feel embarrassed," said Washington to him, "in presenting ourselves before an officer just from the French army."

"It is to learn, and not to instruct that I came here," was Lafayette's apt and modest reply; and it gained him immediate popularity.

*Life of George Washington*, Washington Irving, Vol. III, p. 184.

### Washington Weeps—No Money for His Men

"I have a well attested word of Washington, that of James Brown, who was forty years postmaster at Geneva, New York, where I was well acquainted. My witness was the Hon. Charles C. Clark, long Vice-President of the New York Central railroad, and my close personal friend. Brown is now long since gone. He was a prominent man in those times. I fully believe he told the truth. He was a good man and truthful. He was a young clerk in the office of Robert Morris, 'the financier of the Revolution' and, sitting at a table, witnessed this incident:

"Two days before the battle of Brandywine, Washington called at Morris's office in Philadelphia and said that they were so far in arrears with the soldiers' pay, and the men were in such hardships that they had little heart for battle, so they were liable to lose in the event just at hand.

" 'Can you help us?' pleaded the commander-in-chief in a voice husky with emotion.

"Morris shook his head sadly, saying:

" 'I have used up my own means and credit. I am deeply grieved to admit that I can do nothing now—nothing!'

"General Washington, covering his face with his large hands, so that the fingers touched his forehead, burst into an abandon of weeping, and as he sat there sobbing, the tears trickled through his fingers and dropped down his wrists.

"The General soon gained his normal composure, arose and went out without a word. The financier also got up and silently followed him, looking sadly after Washington as he passed slowly down the street.

"Two days later, September 11th, 1777, Washington met Lord Howe at Brandywine and was defeated."

*Extract from a letter from the Rev. Dr Ammi B. Hyde, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Denver, Colorado.*

### **Defeat at Chad's Ford, Brandywine Creek**

Early on September 11th, the British advanced to Chad's Ford, where Washington was posted with the main body, and after some skirmishing began to cannonade at long range. Meantime Cornwallis, with the main body, made a long detour of seventeen miles, and came upon the right flank and rear of the Americans. Sullivan, who was on the right, had failed to guard the fords above, and through lack of information was practically surprised. Washington, on rumors that the enemy were marching toward his right, with the instinct of a great soldier was about to cross the river in his front and crush the enemy there, but he also was misled and kept back by false reports. When the truth was known, it was too late. The right wing had been beaten and flung back, the enemy were nearly in the rear, and were now advancing in earnest in

front. All that man could do was done. Troops were pushed forward and a gallant stand was made at various points; but the critical moment had come and gone, and there was nothing for it but a hasty retreat, which came near degenerating into a rout.

The causes of this complete defeat, for such it was, are easily seen. Washington had planned his battle and chosen his position well. If he had not been deceived by the first reports, he even then would have fallen upon and overwhelmed the British centre before they could have reached his right wing. But the Americans, to begin with, were outnumbered. They had only eleven thousand effective men, while the British brought fifteen of their eighteen thousand into action. Then the Americans suffered, as they constantly did, from misinformation, and from an absence of system in learning the enemy's movements. Washington's attack was fatally checked in this way, and Sullivan was surprised from the same causes, as well as from his own culpable ignorance of the country beyond him, which was the reason of his failure to guard the upper fords. The Americans lost, also, by the unsteadiness of the new troops when the unexpected happens, and when the panic-bearing notion that they are surprised and likely to be surrounded comes upon them with a sudden shock.

This defeat was complete and severe, and it was followed in a few days by that of Wayne, who narrowly escaped utter ruin. Yet through all this disaster we can see the advance which had been made since the equally unfortunate and very similar battle on Long Island. Then, the troops seemed to lose heart and courage, the army was held together with difficulty, and could do nothing but retreat. Now, in the few days which Howe, as usual, gave us with such fatal effect to himself, Washington rallied his army, and finding them in excellent spirits marched down the Lancaster road to fight again. On the eve of battle

a heavy storm came on, which so injured the arms and ammunitions that with bitter disappointment he was obliged to withdraw, but nevertheless it is plain how much this forward movement meant. At the moment, however, it looked badly enough, especially after the defeat of Wayne, for Howe pressed forward, took possession of Philadelphia, and encamped the main body of his army at Germantown.

*George Washington, Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. I, p. 191.*

### **Report of the Battle of Brandywine**

*(Letter to the President of Congress.)*

“CHESTER twelve o'clock at Night.

“11 September, 1777.

“SIR,

“I am sorry to inform you, that, in this day's engagement, we have been obliged to leave the enemy masters of the field. Unfortunately the intelligence recd., of the enemy's advancing up the Brandywine & crossing at a ford about six miles above us, was uncertain and contradictory, notwithstanding all my pains to get the best. This prevented my making a disposition adequate to the force with which the enemy attacked us on our right; in consequence of which, the troops first engaged were obliged to retire before they could be reinforced. In the midst of the attack on our right, that body of the enemy, which remained on the other side of Chad's Ford, crossed it, & attacked the division there under the command of General Wayne, & the light troops under Genl Maxwell, who, after a severe conflict, also retired. The militia under the command of Major-General Armstrong, being posted at a ford about two miles below Chad's had no opportunity of engaging.

“But altho we fought under many disadvantages, and were, from the causes above mentioned, obliged to

retire, yet our loss of men is not, I am persuaded, very considerable, I believe much less than the enemy's. We have also lost seven or eight pieces of cannon, according to the best information I can at present obtain. The baggage, having been previously moved off, is all secure, saving the men's blankets, which being at their backs many of them doubtless were lost. I have directed all the troops to assemble behind Chester, where they are now arranging for this night. Notwithstanding the misfortune of the day, I am happy to find the troops in good spirits; and I hope another time we shall compensate for the losses now sustained. The Marquis de Lafayette was wounded in the leg, & General Woodford in the hand; divers other officers were wounded, & some slain; but the numbers of either cannot now be ascertained. I have the honor to be, &c.,

[G. WASHINGTON.]

"P.S. It has not been in my power to send you earlier intelligence, the present being the first leisure moment I have had since the action."

*Writings of George Washington*, Edited by Lawrence B. Evans, Ph.D., p. 88.

### A Small Defeated Army Defies the Victor

Washington, after his defeat at Brandywine, retreated with most of his army to Chester on the Delaware. There seems to have been some scattering among his men, although it cannot be said that his army was demoralized. His wounded were sent to Chester and various places. Among the wounded, young Lafayette, with a ball in his leg, was carried to Bethlehem, to be cared for by the Moravians.

The next day Washington took most of his army up the Delaware towards the Schuylkill. Howe now had him forced into the angle of the two rivers, and could have compelled his surrender or destruction. But Washington passed on unmolested, crossed the Schuylkill, and encamped in Germantown between the two rivers.

Having declined to destroy Washington's army when he had it in his power, it was now somewhat difficult for Howe to cross the Schuylkill and enter Philadelphia. The floating bridges were all taken away, and the steep banks of the river made crossing doubly difficult so long as Washington was at large and might attack the first small force that got across the stream.

The desire of the British army to get into Philadelphia and of Washington to prevent it kept up for two weeks a contest of wits between Washington and Howe. Howe was determined to do no more fighting if he could help it. He appeared to be in no hurry, and remained camped near the battle-field of the Brandywine. Wayne's scouts who watched him reported that his men were quietly resting, cooking, and washing their clothes.

Stung by his defeat and seeing the laxity of Howe, Washington was impatient to try another issue. He soon crossed the Schuylkill to the same side with Howe, and marched twenty miles until he found the British a little west of Paoli at the Warren Tavern. There the two armies confronted each other, apparently ready for battle.

But there was no battle. The extraordinary spectacle was presented of a small defeated army returning to the victor and standing in front of him, daring him to fight.

*The True History of the American Revolution*, Sydney George Fisher, p. 342.

### A Drunken General at Germantown

During the night march, several incidents occurred that might be deemed ominous of the fortunes of the coming day. The celebrated Count Pulaski, who was charged with the service of watching the enemy and gaining intelligence, was said to have been found asleep in a farm-house. But although the gallant Pole might have been overtaken by slumber, from the great fatigue growing out of the duties of the advance guard, yet no soldier was more wide awake

in the moment of combat than the intrepid and chivalric Count Pulaski.

The delay in the arrival of the ammunition-wagons was productive of most serious consequences in the action of the succeeding day. The general officer [Gen. Adam Stephen, of Virginia] to whom the blame of this delay was attached was afterward discovered in a state of intoxication, lying in the corner of a fence. Lieutenant Benjamin Grymes, of the Life-guard, grasping the delinquent by the collar, placed him on his legs, and bade him go and do his duty. This bold proceeding on the part of a subaltern toward a general officer was certainly at variance with rules or orders of discipline; but the exigency of the moment, and the degrading spectacle that an officer of high rank had presented to the eyes of the soldiery, would seem to have warranted a proceeding that, under different circumstances, must be considered as subversive of all military discipline. Grymes was a bold, brave soldier, enthusiastically attached to the cause of his country, and foremost among the asserters of her liberties. The general officer of whom we have spoken was brought to a court-martial and cashiered.

*Recollections of Washington*, by His Adopted Son, George Washington Parke Custis,  
p. 195.

### Fighting in Fog

The only hope of defeating this well-posted force lay in a surprise, and Washington selected the night of October 3, 1777, for the attempt. Starting his men on their long march about seven in the evening, he moved them so rapidly that they reached their destination before sunrise the next morning, and though some vague rumors of his advance had reached the British camp, they excited no alarm. Just outside the town he divided his command into four columns, assigning each to one of the four roads leading into the town, with orders that they should all press for-



ward at the same moment, and pouring in from different directions, drive the attack home with a fury that would create confusion, divide the enemy, and afford an opportunity for overwhelming its various detachments, one at a time. This plan, which aimed at nothing less than the destruction of the entire British army, was an ambitious and daring move, in view of the fact that the Americans were outnumbered, but it was well thought out, and the four divisions moved to their posts full of confidence and hope, John Marshall, the future Chief Justice of the United States, marching with one of the columns. By this time, however, a heavy fog hung over the roads and fields, and before the final advance was fairly started the converging columns were completely screened from each other's view, and the men had to grope their way forward with considerable caution.

Down the main road toward the head of the street crept the Americans under General Anthony Wayne, and before long they struck the British sentries and gobbled them up almost before they had time to cry out. The surprise was complete, but as the Americans pressed forward, sweeping everything before them, they suddenly stumbled upon Colonel Musgrave's regiment, which sprang to arms, taking cover behind fences, walls, and hedges and a fierce struggle followed, the combatants fighting at close range and firing at the flashes of each other's muskets through the curtain of the fog. It was only for a moment, however, that the onrush was checked and most of the Fortieth Regiment was soon flying at top speed from the victorious Americans, leaving its Colonel and a handful of men practically surrounded.

But Colonel Musgrave, though cornered, was far from being caught. His one chance of escape lay in reaching some shelter where he could hold out until re-enforcements reached him, and, taking it, he made a dash for the Chew Mansion immediately behind him, threw his men inside,

and opened a brisk fire from the windows on his pursuers as they leaped forward out of the fog. For a moment the Americans hesitated. The gallant officer and his men were completely surrounded and could not possibly escape, so a young Virginian lieutenant was sent forward with a white flag to demand their immediate surrender. Doubtless they did not see his handkerchief, or bit of white rag, in the misty light, and before he came within hailing distance a musket in one of the upper windows flashed and the officer fell dead, clutching his flag of truce.

From that instant the fate of the whole enterprise was practically sealed, for Wayne's division, instead of leaving the building under a sufficient guard and pressing forward according to Washington's plan, determined to avenge what was regarded as the wanton murder of their comrade, and bringing up cannon they proceeded to batter the house to pieces. But the old dwelling was strongly constructed and the cannon balls made but little impression on its stone walls. Efforts were then made to set it on fire and carry it by assault, but Colonel Musgrave and his men, realizing the temper of their assailants and the strength of their own position, heroically determined to sell their lives as dearly as possible, and the Americans who stepped out of the fog bank and within range of their muskets courted death.

Solid shot crashed through the windows and tore the doors apart; plaster and bricks flew up in dust; chimneys toppled, and the barricades of furniture were blown to splinters, but though rush after rush was made to take advantage of these openings, only one man reached the windows alive. Indeed, no less than fifty-seven Americans fell under the deadly fire that spurted from every loophole in the improvised fortress, and every victim increased the assailants' rage. The roar of this mimic battle was, of course, heard by the other parts of the Continental army, and before long several battalions, a brigade, and a whole division



*Engraved by G. Uman from Original Drawing by C. Schussard.*

ATTACKING THE CHEW MANSION IN THE BATTLE OF GERMANTOWN



were hurriedly groping their way toward what they supposed to be the main field of action, each screened from the other by the fog.

Up to this moment success was far from impossible, for some of the divisions had already fallen upon the British and were driving them with considerable confusion back upon their supports. Indeed, a little pressure would have undoubtedly started the panic upon which Washington had counted, but the bombardment of the Chew Mansion delayed Wayne's troops, and before this could be corrected two of the brigades which were moving toward the sound of the cannonading got directly behind Wayne's division, and mistaking them for the enemy, fired point-blank into their ranks, and believing they were being attacked from the rear, Colonel Musgrave's besiegers began a retreat.

Meanwhile the other divisions, finding themselves without support, gave way before the re-enforcements which the British hurried from Philadelphia and something very like a panic struck the entire American force. For a time it seemed as though the day which had begun with such brilliant prospects would end in utter disaster, but Washington, ably seconded by Greene, soon got control of the fugitives, and when Howe started to pursue he found the Americans so skilfully posted that he retired, well satisfied with having saved his army.

Washington thereupon withdrew his troops in good order, having lost about a thousand men, of which four hundred were taken prisoners, but having inflicted such a blow on the enemy that all thought of rescuing Burgoyne was abandoned.

*On the Trail of Washington, Frederick Trevor Hill, p. 163*

### **"You Will Fire upon Your Own People!"**

Six companies of the fortieth regiment, under their lieutenant-colonel, being hard pressed by the advancing columns of Americans, threw themselves into Chew's

house, a strongly constructed stone building, and barricading the lower windows, opened a destructive fire from the cellars and upper windows. The Americans, finding their musketry made no impression, were in the act of dragging up their cannon to batter the walls, when a *ruse de guerre* was attempted, which, however, failed of success. An officer galloped up from the house, and cried out, "What are you about; you will fire upon your own people." The artillery opened, but, after fifteen or twenty rounds, the pieces were found to be of too small caliber to make a serious impression, and were withdrawn.

A most daring and chivalric attempt was now made to fire the building. Lieutenant-Colonel Laurens, aide-de-camp to the commander-in-chief, with a few volunteers, rushed up to the house under cover of the smoke, and applied a burning brand to the principal door, at the same time engaging passes with his sword with the enemy on the inside. By almost a miracle, this gallant and accomplished officer escaped unharmed, although his clothes were repeatedly torn by the enemy's shot. Another and equally daring attempt was made by Major White, aide-de-camp to General Sullivan, but without as fortunate a result. The major, while in the act of firing one of the cellar windows, was mortally wounded, and died soon afterward.

*Recollections of Washington*, by His Adopted Son, George Washington Parke Custis, p. 198.

### Holding up Their Empty Cartridge Boxes

At this period of the action the fog had become so dense that objects could scarcely be distinguished at a few yards' distance. The Americans had penetrated the enemy's camp even to their second line, which was drawn up to receive them about the centre of Germantown. The ammunition of the right wing, including the Maryland brigades, became exhausted, the soldiers holding up their empty cartridge boxes, when their officers called on them

to rally and face the enemy. The extended line of operations, which embraced nearly two miles, the unfavorable nature of the ground in the environs of Germantown for the operation of troops (a large portion of whom were undisciplined), the ground being much cut up, and intersected by stone fences and enclosures of various sorts; the delay of the left wing under Greene in getting into action—all these causes, combined with an atmosphere so dense from fog and smoke as to make it impossible to distinguish friend from foe, produced a retreat in the American army at the moment when victory seemed to be within its grasp.

*Recollections of Washington*, by His Adopted Son, George Washington Parke Custis, p. 200.

### Heroic General Nash

While gallantly leading the North Carolina brigade, that formed part of the reserve, into action, General Nash was mortally wounded. A round-shot from the British artillery striking a sign-post in Germantown, glanced therefrom, and, passing through his horse, shattered the general's thigh on the opposite side. The fall of the animal hurled its unfortunate rider with considerable force to the ground. With surpassing courage and presence of mind, General Nash, covering his wound with both of his hands, gayly called out to his men,

"Never mind me, I have had a devil of a tumble; rush on, my boys, rush after the enemy, I'll be after you presently."

Human nature could do no more. Faint from loss of blood, and the intense agony of his wound, the sufferer was borne to a house hard by, and attended by Doctor Craik, by special order of the commander-in-chief. The doctor gave his patient but feeble hopes of recovery, even with the chances of amputation, when Nash observed,

"It may be considered unmanly to complain, but my agony is too great for human nature to bear. I am

aware that my days, perhaps hours, are numbered, but I do not repine at my fate. I have fallen on the field of honor while leading my brave Carolinians to the assault of the enemy. I have a last request to make of his excellency the commander-in-chief, that he will permit you, my dear doctor, to remain with me, to protect me while I live, and my remains from insult."

*Recollections of Washington*, by His Adopted Son, George Washington Parke Custis  
p. 202.

### How the Battle Was Lost

Washington, as usual when matters went ill, exposed himself recklessly, to the great alarm of his generals, but all in vain. He was deeply disappointed, and expressed himself so at first, for he saw that the men had unaccountably given way when they were on the edge of victory. The underlying cause was of course, as at Long Island and Brandywine, the unsteadiness of the raw troops, and Washington felt rightly, after the first sting had passed, that he had really achieved a great deal. Congress applauded the attempt, and when the smoke of battle had cleared away, men generally perceived that its having been fought at all was in reality the important fact. It made also a profound impression upon the French cabinet. Eagerly watching the course of events, they saw the significance of the fact that an army raised within a year could fight a battle in the open field, endure a severe defeat, and take the offensive and make a bold and well-planned attack, which narrowly missed being overwhelmingly successful. To the observant and trained eyes of Europe, the defeat at Germantown made it evident that there was fighting material among these untrained colonists, capable of becoming formidable; and that there was besides a powerful will and directing mind, capable on its part of bringing this same material into the required shape and condition. To dispassionate onlookers, England's grasp on her colonies appeared to be



slipping away very rapidly. Washington himself saw the meaning of it all plainly enough, for it was but the development of his theory of carrying on the war.

*George Washington* Henry Cabot Lodge, Vol. I, p. 195.

**"Ah, These Americans Are an Elastic People!"**

But the most happy and imposing influences upon America and her cause, resulting from the battle of Germantown, were experienced abroad. "Eh, mon Dieu," exclaimed the Count de Vergennes, the French minister of foreign affairs, to the American commissioners in Paris, "what is this you tell me, Messieurs; another battle, and the British grand army surprised in its camp at Germantown, Sir William and his veterans routed and flying for two hours, and a great victory only denied to Washington by a tissue of accidents beyond human control? Ah, ah, these Americans are an elastic people! Press them down to-day, they rise to-morrow. And then, my dear sirs, these military wonders to be achieved by an army raised within a single year, opposed to the skill, discipline, and experience of European troops commanded by generals grown gray in war. The brave Americans, they are worthy of the aid of France. They will succeed at last."

*Recollections of Washington*, by His Adopted Son, George Washington Parke Custis,

p. 207.

VOL. I—24









